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Building Communicative Competence: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of an Intensive Japanese-Language Program

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BUILDING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INTENSIVE JAPANESE-LANGUAGE PROGRAM

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Dissertation Abstract
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an Intensive Japanese-Language Program

Even though language-program evaluations provide educators with various types of information on teaching practices and the programs in which they work, insufficient literature discusses issues related to language-program evaluation. This mixed-methods study examined the effectiveness of a Japanese-language program offered at a government-sponsored Institute located in northern California on language-program evaluation and developing communicative competence at postsecondary schools.

Data comprised two sets of surveys, six individual interviews, and one group interview. Survey respondents were 35 former students of the institute and 12 Japanese instructors who are currently teaching Japanese or have taught Japanese at the Institute. Of the 35 students, 6 participated in individual interviews, and 6 of the 12 instructors formed a focus group. The mean scores and standard deviations calculated for each answer provide the quantitative data. All qualitative data were labeled and categorized according to the words used.

The quantitative and the qualitative data obtained from the surveys and interviews provided positive and negative feedback. Many students commented they developed solid communicative competence while taking the basic course offered at the Institute. Linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence are the key elements the Institute should consider to improve its curriculum. All instructors' responses revealed they encountered a dilemma when working at the

Institute: although they wanted to teach what they believed to be important, it was impossible to do because they would have had to deviate from the Institute's curriculum.

Former students and instructors provided surprisingly similar opinions. Although instructors would like to introduce exactly what former students designated as important missing features, they are unable to make dramatic changes unless the Institute revises the curriculum based on what graduates experienced. Findings from this research supported Schultz's (2006) remark that it is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for the general education foreign-language requirement to develop students' communicative competence.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work of the candidate alone.

Yukiko Konishi	May 10, 2016
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Dr. Sedique Popal	May 10, 2016
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Dr. Shabnam Koirala-Azad	May 10, 2016
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving parents, Moriya Konishi and Takako Konishi.

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CHAPTER I

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

Curriculum is a broad term that encompasses all the planned learning experiences provided by an institution or a course of study, with three main curricular processes: (a) planning, (b) enacting/implementing, and (c) evaluating (Graves. 2014). These three processes should be implemented at every curricular level: lesson, unit, course, or program. At the program level, first, a person or group of people who design a curriculum plan for an educational program. Then, instructors and learners practice the curriculum over time, either following or diverging from the plan. Finally, the planners and instructors informally or formally evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Richards (2001) points out that Even after establishing a curriculum, many important questions remain to be answered: (a) whether the curriculum is achieving its goals; (b) what is occurring in classrooms and schools where the curriculum is being implemented; (c) whether the curriculum satisfies teachers, administrators, students, parents, and employers who are affected by it; (d) whether the job done by people who have taken part in developing and teaching a language course meets the requirements; and (e) whether the curriculum has positive features when compared with similar curricula (Richards, 2001). Curriculum evaluation can answer all these questions:

> [Curriculum evaluation] focuses on collecting information about different aspects of a language program in order to understand how the program works, and how successfully it works, enabling different kinds of decisions to be made about the program, such as whether the program responds to learners' needs, whether

> further teacher training is required for teachers working in the program, or whether students are learning sufficiently from it. (Richards, 2001, p. 286)

Evaluation may focus on different aspects of a language program: curriculum design, syllabus and program content, classroom processes, instruction materials, teachers, teacher training, students, pupil progress, learner motivation, institution, learning environment, staff development, and decision making (Weir & Roberts, 1994). Program evaluation can identify important issues or yield much useful information for all people involved in the organization program.

Statement of the Problem

Problems exist in two main areas: language-program evaluation and the development of communicative competence. Lynch defined evaluation "as the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions" (1996, p. 2). Educators must include ongoing evaluation processes in their activities, because evaluation enables educators to judge the effectiveness of existing educational programs and identify possible areas for improvement (Patton, 1997, 2008). Hymes (1967) coined the term *communicative competence*, meaning the "communicative competence that enables a member of the community to know when to speak and when to remain silent, which code to use, when, where, and to whom, etc." (Hymes, 1967, p. 13). Despite the important role that language-program evaluations and communicative competence play in foreign-language education, studies of both areas have revealed two important flaws. The first flaw is insufficient literature that discusses issues related to language-program evaluation, even though several scholars have described this problem for more than 20 years (Beretta, 1992; Lynch, 1990; Norris, 2008, 2009). Language program evaluation is

gaining a renewed recognition because the demand for language education programs has increased (Yang, 2009). Therefore, it is extremely important to conduct more research on foreign language program evaluation and to share findings with interested audiences. The second deficit in the area of language-program evaluation is that some previous researchers narrowly interpreted their results and failed to share useful findings with the readers. Consequently, language instructors, curriculum developers, and administrators urgently need a different type of program evaluation that can help them understand what they are doing well and what they need to improve.

A major goal for students who take a language course is to develop communicative competence (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Savignon (1997, pp. 14–15) summarized the characteristics of communicative competence.

1. Communicative competence means the interrelationship people share who use the same speaking system.
2. People can be competent in written and spoken language, and in other systems.
3. Communicative competence requires people to understand the context and to have had relevant experience. Communicating competently requires the speaker to understand the situation and to choose the appropriate style of communication.
4. Competence means having the ability to successfully communicate, whereas performance means doing so. Because performance is what other can judge, it provides a means of improvement and the ability for oneself and others to evaluate.

5. The speaker (or writer) and listener(s) must cooperate for communication to take place. The amount they cooperate will determine the level of success of the communication.

Three scholars highlighted several problems in developing four components of communicative competence in postsecondary schools: linguistic, sociocultural, discourse, and strategic competence. These obstacles are (a) college language departments place insufficient emphasis on the development of interactive, transactional, and oral language (Byrnes, 2006); (b) a model of instruction that lets foreign-language learners develop tourist-like competence (Kramsch, 2006); (c) insufficient instruction time (Schulz, 2006); (d) lack of appropriate contexts (Schulz, 2006); and (e) fewer opportunities to interact with native speakers of the target language (Schulz, 2006). Even though program evaluations may explain these problems, very few studies provided these kinds of explanations; therefore, research that addresses these problematic issues is necessary.

Background and Need for the Study

Japanese Learners in the Government-Sponsored Institute

The Institute where I work is a government-sponsored multiservice school, considered one of the largest schools for foreign-language instruction in the world. The Institute provides instruction in the State of California and offers classes in more than two dozen languages 5 days a week, 6–7 hours per day. Students who take the language courses are personnel working for the National Security Service, for the federal government, and for various law-enforcement agencies. Educators teach four categories of languages at the Institute, divided into four levels based on their difficulty. The courses last between 26 and 64 weeks. All candidates for the Basic Program must be at least high

school graduates and must have taken a test that measures their aptitude to learn a foreign language. For admission to the Basic Program, the Institute assigns candidates to a specific language to study based on their aptitude test scores. Below is a summary of the categories of language taught at the Institute, the aptitude test scores that students are required to achieve to be placed in each category, and the length of time candidates must study each language:

Category I languages include French, Portuguese, and Spanish; 95 aptitude test scores; 26 training weeks.

Category II languages include German and Indonesian; 100 aptitude test scores; 35 training weeks.

Category III languages include Hebrew, Hindi, Persian Farsi, Dari, Punjabi, Russian, Serbian/Croatian, Tagalog, Turkish, and Urdu; 105 aptitude test scores; 48 training weeks.

Category IV languages include Modern Standard Arabic, Arabic Egyptian, Arabic Iraqi, Arabic Levantine, Chinese Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, and Pashto; 110 aptitude test scores; 64 training weeks.

The mission of the Institute is to provide students with culturally based foreign-language education, training, and evaluation to enhance the security of the nation. After students complete all basic language-program requirements, they must take Listening and Reading Proficiency tests and participate in an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), evaluated based on an Interagency Language Roundtable scale (ILR). The diploma is awarded to students who receive a score of 2 or higher on the Listening and Reading tests, a score of 1+ or higher on the Speaking test, and who has a cumulative grade-point

average of C (2.0) or higher. The government website provides the following description of the ILR:

> The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) is an unfunded Federal interagency organization established for the coordination and sharing of information about language-related activities at the Federal level. It serves as the premier way for departments and agencies of the Federal government to keep abreast of the progress and implementation of techniques and technology for language learning, language use, language testing and other language-related activities (ILR, 2015).
>
> The ILR listening, reading, and speaking skill scales follow:
>
> - 0 (No proficiency)
> - 0+ (Memorized Proficiency)
> - 1 (Elementary Proficiency)
> - 1+ (Elementary Proficiency, Plus)
> - 2 (Limited Working Proficiency)
> - 2+ (Limited Working Proficiency, Plus)
> - 3 (General Professional Proficiency)
> - 3+ (General Professional Proficiency, Plus)
> - 4 (Advanced Professional Proficiency)
> - 4+ (Advanced Professional Proficiency, Plus)
> - 5 (Functionally Native Proficiency) (ILR, 2015).

The ILR website provides more detailed information about ILR listening, reading, and speaking.

The main goal of the Basic Program at the Institute is to help the students develop the functional language skills they need when working on assignments ordered by the governmental agencies to which they belong. The features of the curriculum are quite unique. The way the Institute assigns each student a specific language, the amount of instruction time, and the program requirements and goals differ significantly from those of foreign-language programs in postsecondary schools. The Japanese language program is the oldest Basic Program at the Institute. Labeled Category IV, students spend 64 weeks studying Japanese language and culture.

Evaluation Administered in the Institute

During language instruction, the Institute conducts two evaluations: at midterm and at the end of each course. The information collected consists of feedback on the curriculum, the instructor's effectiveness, and the program's effectiveness. However, the questions used in the questionnaires are quite general and fail to address specific concerns about aspects of the program such as the quality of the curriculum materials, the teaching methodologies adopted by instructors, and the effectiveness of the instruction. Moreover, the Institute uses the same questions at midterm and at the end of the course, even though different types of concerns should be addressed aligned with the different stages of learning. By discussing the quality of the learning experience of students, "a programme has to work at the level of experience" (Kiely, 2009, p. 107). Thus, the program evaluations currently carried out at the Institute provide information about the quality of the learning experience of students, but not information from which the language instructors and curriculum developers might learn about their effectiveness. Because no research exists on whether the Japanese language program at the Institute

helps students build communicative competence, a study is necessary to increase the program's effectiveness.

The majority of foreign-language program evaluations conducted at the college level have used current students to collect information about program effectiveness by distributing questionnaires and administering interviews (Bernhardt, 2006; Kiely, 2009; Milleret & Silveira, 2009; Morris, 2006; Pfeiffer & Byrnes, 2009; Ramsay, 2009; Sempere, Mohn & Pieroni, 2009; Walther, 2009). A question persists, however: Can the students who currently study a particular language in the program be the right research participants? Generally, most of these students take passive roles while learning foreign languages, and have difficulty saying whether their learning will be effective or useful in the future. In contrast, at an institution where foreign languages are taught for specific purposes, it is more effective to obtain evaluative feedback from the graduates of each program at the institution.

The Japanese program at the Institute usually serves students who will have specific work assignments in Japan after completing the 64-week language program. Because those students intend to work in Japan, using the Japanese language soon after graduating from the Institute, they can clearly see what kinds of learning materials, teaching methodologies, and instructions proved useful. However, no researchers used feedback from former students. Although the Japanese program has continued to achieve good results in preparing students to successfully pass the final tests, the feedback from these former students can be very important for further program improvement. Moreover, an evaluation of the Japanese program can contribute useful information not only to the Japanese program itself but also to other language programs at the Institute. Also,

findings will be useful for educators involved in foreign-language programs at postsecondary schools.

Purpose Statements

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the Japanese program offered at the Institute located in California. The focus is to see whether the program is providing culturally based foreign-language education that learners can use to communicate with native Japanese speakers and complete their work assignments in Japan. I collected data using quantitative and qualitative methods and conducted multiple phases of inquiry, such as a web-based survey of Likert-scale and open-ended questions and open-ended interviews with graduates and instructors at the Institute. I then analyzed the data and discuss the results thoroughly.

Research Questions

The following research questions drove the research:

1 How effective is the Japanese language program at the Institute in helping students build communicative competence?

2 Does the Institute provide a curriculum and cultural information that helps students build communicative competence?

3 What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?

4 What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?

Theoretical Framework

As a theoretical framework, this research drew from the context-adaptive model (CAM) developed by Lynch (1990, 1996, 2003) and from a pedagogical perspective on communicative competence. With the belief that "evaluation efforts do need to be tailored to the specific concerns of language education programs" (Lynch, 1996, pp. 2–3), Lynch developed the CAM for program evaluation, which consists of seven steps: (a) audience and goals, (b) context inventory, (c) preliminary thematic framework, (d) data-collection design/system, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, and (g) evaluation report. Lynch believed that the adaptable nature of the CAM allows avoidance of many problems that have troubled previous attempts to evaluate language-education programs. Also, Lynch (2003) conceptualized the design of assessment and evaluation based on the CAM for program evaluation. In designing assessment and evaluation, Lynch (2003) discussed the interactions of (a) audiences and goals, (b) context and themes, (c) selection of an approach/decision on paradigms, and (d) selection of a design for assessment and evaluation. Whereas the original CAM for program evaluation (Lynch, 1990, 1996) focused only on program evaluation, the new version covers evaluation and assessment, including a discussion of test development. The original model is one of the theoretical frameworks used in this study.

The major goal of foreign-language education is to help students develop communicative competence (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000), defined by Hymes (1967, p. 13) as the "communicative competence that enables a member of the community to know when to speak and when to remain silent, which code to use, when, where, and to whom, etc." Reacting against Chomsky's (1965) theory that language competence

consists only as an abstract notion of grammatical competence, Hymes asserted that sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence play important roles in language use. Based on Hymes's concept, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) averred language teachers developed communicative language teaching.

Canale and Swain (1980) first perceived the concept of communicative competence as a pedagogical framework. Canale (1983) distinguished communicative competence as knowledge, referencing what one knows (consciously and subconsciously), and as skill in using this knowledge, referencing how well one can use that knowledge in actual communication: "These notions of knowledge and skill in using this knowledge are of crucial relevance to second language pedagogy" (Canale, 1983, p. 14). Communicative competence consists of four components: (a) grammatical competence, which concerns phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics; (b) sociolinguistic competence; (c) discourse competence; and (d) strategic competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). Each of these components is essential and interrelated with the others (Savignon, 2002).

Celce-Murcia (2007) and Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) revised the four components of communicative competence developed by Canale and Swain, emphasizing that discourse competence is the core or central competence. Celce-Murcia (2007) and Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (1995) proposed six components of communicative competence: (a) sociocultural competence, (b) discourse competence, (c) linguistic competence, (d) formulaic competence, (e) interactional competence, and (f) strategic competence. Four of these, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, and strategic competence form the second theoretical foundation

of this study. Communicative competence is the central theoretical concept in language teaching, which "refers to both processes and goals in classroom learning" (Savignon, 2002, p. 1).

Limitation of the Study

It is important to acknowledge some limitations that constrain this research. The first limitation is that the findings from this study may not be generalized to foreign-language programs of other postsecondary schools for three reasons: (a) this study has a small sample size; (b) the language Institute used for this study is unique, and the curriculum differs markedly from that of college foreign-language programs in the United States; and (c) the informants who participated in the survey and interviews are either retired or current governmental personnel.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two reasons. First, the study of language-program evaluation is urgently needed. Very few researchers published studies on the evaluation of foreign-language programs, especially at the postsecondary level. In comparing publications in the general field of educational evaluation with those focusing on language-teaching evaluation, Beretta (1992) observed that far fewer books and articles exist in the field of language-teaching evaluation. Norris, Davis, Sinicrope, and Watanabe emphasized the necessity for foreign-language program evaluation:

> What is very much needed at this point is a clear understanding of the actual priorities for evaluation that face [foreign-language] programs in the unique setting of U.S. higher education, as well as an indication of [foreign-language]

> educators' capacities to respond through meaningful evaluation practices. (2009, p. 6)

Clearly, the present study makes an important contribution not only to the field of foreign-language program evaluation but also to areas of applied-linguistic and second-language acquisition.

The second reason this study is significant is that the difference in curricula between the Institute and other postsecondary schools can provide useful information regarding factors scholars consider problematic in developing communicative competence. Five problems in developing communicative competence commonly observed in the postsecondary schools were discussed previously. However, the Institute's curriculum does not address those problematic areas. Understanding whether students of the Institute develop better communicative competence by course completion would explain key elements of developing communicative competence in a target language.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions clarify how term are used in this study.

Communicative competence: The ability of language learners to interact with others to make meaningful and appropriate utterances. Communicative competence comprises grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence (Savignon, 2002).

Communicative language teaching: An approach to language teaching that emphasizes that the purpose of learning a language is to communicate with others (Duff, 2014).

Discourse competence: This competence involves the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and sentences/utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written whole with reference to a particular message and context (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 16).

Formative purposes: This purpose refers to decisions about assessing the progress and ongoing needs of individuals in a language program or the ongoing nature of the program (i.e., which components are working, which need to be changed; Lynch, 2003, p. 7).

Grammatical competence: Refers to one's ability to form and interpret sentence-level features of language effectively. This competence includes vocabulary, syntax, morphology, semantics, and phonology (Duff, 2014).

Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR): ILR is an unfunded federal interagency organization established to coordinate and share information about language-related activities at the federal level (ILR, 2015).

Sociolinguistic competence: This competence consists of the social and cultural knowledge a speaker needs to use language appropriately with reference to formality, politeness, and other contextually defined choices (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

Strategic competence: The strategies and procedures relevant to language learning, language processing, and language production. Strategic competence activates knowledge of the other competencies and helps language users compensate for gaps or deficiencies in knowledge when they communicate (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p.16).

Summary

Language-program evaluation provides educators with much useful information about how to improve their teaching practices and programs. However, the amount of published research on language-program evaluation is insufficient. An urgent need persists to contribute to the literature in this field.

The frameworks for this study are the CAM developed by Lynch (1990) and the four components of communicative competence described by Canale and Swain (1980), and revised by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) and Celce-Murcia (2007). Data collection took place through surveys and interviews with former students who studied Japanese at the Institute and Japanese instructors who currently teach at the Institute. Findings obtained through this evaluation research will be shared with appropriate audiences.

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to examine the effectiveness of the Japanese program offered at the Institute. The study examined former students' confidence in developing the communicative competence necessary to live and work in Japan and instructors' confidence in preparing students to live and work in Japan.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Curriculum models would not be complete without an evaluation component (Nunan, 1988). Although program evaluation is an important component of the curriculum, and it should be conducted occasionally, it is the weak component in many foreign-language departments (Sullivan, 2006). Very little literature on language-program evaluation (especially at the postsecondary level) is available (Beretta, 1992; Lynch, 1990; Norris, 2008, 2009). Studies conducted so far used evaluation very narrowly and failed to address useful details (Lynch, 1990; Yang, 2009).

Although developing communicative competence is a major goal for foreign-language learners, scholars have pointed out several problems in developing communicative competence in postsecondary schools. Language-program evaluation would explain the sources of those problems. Evaluation would yield how successfully a program works, whether the program responds to the learners' needs, and whether students are learning sufficiently (Richards, 2001).

Overview

This literature review explores two main areas: program evaluation as a part of language curriculum and communicative competence. The first section discusses language-curriculum evaluation; language-program evaluation; measurement, assessment, and evaluation; the purpose of evaluation; curriculum objectives; learning outcomes; and the theory of language-program evaluation. I focus on the importance of program evaluation as well as the problems pointed out by scholars in the field. The second

section examines competence and performance, sociolinguistics issues, a pedagogical perspective on communicative competence, the four components of communicative competence, communicative-language teaching, and communicative competence as a framework for college-level foreign-language instruction.

Program Evaluation

Language Curriculum Evaluation

In 1949, Tyler laid the foundation for the study of the nature and process of curriculum (as cited in Richards, 2001; Snow, 2014). Four fundamental questions must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan of instruction:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Tyler, 1949, pp. 46–47, as cited in Snow, 2014, p. 457)

Richards (2001) categorized these four questions as (a) aims and objectives, (b) content, (c) organization, and (d) evaluation. Whereas the terms *goal* and *aim* describe the general purposes of a curriculum, *objective* references a more specific and concrete description of the purposes of curriculum discussion. “Objectives describe a learning outcome” that “should be consistent with the curriculum aim” (Richards, 2001, p. 123).

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 184) defined language curriculum as a document that provides guidelines for “textbook writers, teacher trainers, language teachers, developers of computerized and high-tech teaching aids, language testers, and

many other populations that might function as stakeholders in the language teaching context"; moreover, the curriculum should address the cultural, social, and political perspectives of the society of interest. Four key elements comprise curriculum: (a) initial planning procedures, which include data collection and learner grouping; (b) content selection and gradation; (c) methodology, including the selection of learning activities and materials; and (d) ongoing monitoring, assessment, and evaluation (Nunan, 1988). Language-curriculum development is an aspect of the broader field of curriculum development or curriculum studies:

> Curriculum development focuses on determining what knowledge, skills, and values students learn in schools, what experiences should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning in schools or educational systems can be planned, measured, and evaluated. (Richards, 2001, p. 2)

Thus, the curriculum of any existing language program at any level or any educational institution should be planned, established, and developed, and should be occasionally measured or evaluated to observe if the students' learning outcomes are compatible with the program goal.

Language-Program Evaluation

Few studies addressed a generalized evaluation model that covers the full range of concerns of language-teaching programs (Lynch, 1990). Similarly, compared to a massive amount of literature in the general field of educational evaluation, very few authors discussed the field of language teaching program evaluation. Evaluation studies appearing in language-teaching journals either debated the methods used or focused on

highly politicized bilingual programs. Although Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language is a major professional organization, it is rare that program evaluations gain special interest. Evaluation of language-teaching programs during the 1970s and 1980s gained very little attention in educational evaluation (Beretta, 1992).

Almost 3 decades after Lynch (1990) pointed out the scarcity of publications in the field of language-program evaluation, Norris (2008, 2009) commented on the lack of published reports that address how evaluation happens. Language teachers tend to think evaluation reports should be produced for evaluation clients rather than for a broader academic public, or should be produced by external experts for mandated purposes. Further, evaluative processes such as standardized testing have come to be viewed "as political weapons rather than educational tools [but that] evaluation can contribute to understanding and improving language teaching practices and programs" (2009, p. 7). In summary, a great demand persists for studies of language-program evaluation.

Even though evaluation is the systematic attempt to examine what happens in language programs, and serves as the basis for judgments and decisions about these programs, the focus of the applied linguistic literature on program evaluation has focused "primarily on specific issues concerning evaluation methods (Beretta, 1986a, 1986c; Elley, 1989; Long, 1983, 1984) and the assessment of student achievement (Bachman, 1989; Beretta, 1986b; Henning, 1982; Hudson, 1989)" (Lynch, 1990, p. 23). According to Yang (2009, p. 77), during its early implementations, evaluation was often conducted quite narrowly "with a primary focus on making judgments about language programs based on experimental designs and limited quantitative analyses" (e.g., Beretta & Davies, 1985; Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Lynch, 1996). Thus, educators need broader notions of

evaluation through which they can learn which elements of the program work well and which areas need improvement.

Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation

The literature on language-program evaluation often mentions the use of complicated and ambiguous terminologies and definitions when discussing the findings, current issues, the purpose of evaluation, the curriculum objectives, and specific outcomes. Researchers may use the same term to indicate different meanings or may employ different terms to indicate the same meaning (Norris, 2006). Terms such as measurement, assessment, and evaluation provide a three-way distinction that may be helpful for language researchers and teachers:

1. *Measurement* is a numerical indicator obtained through tests or related observation procedures. In using measurement, educators can determine efficiency, objectivity, and technical aspects of construct validity.
2. *Assessment* is the systematic information gathered to see how students learn what has been taught. Through assessment, educators can not only obtain useful information about learners, but also figure out effective ways to instruct learners.
3. *Evaluation* means gathering information about educational programs. The purpose of evaluation is to understand, demonstrate, improve, and judge program value. Through evaluation, educators can find problems existing in programs and develop solutions to improve the quality of the program (Norris, 2006).

Lynch (2003, p. 1) also provided the following definitions of language assessment and program evaluation:

> As I will be using the term, language assessment is defined as the range of procedures used to investigate aspects of individual language learning and ability, including the measurement of proficiency, diagnosis of needs, determination of achievement in relation to syllabus objectives and analysis of ability to perform specific tasks. I define programme evaluation as the systematic inquiry into instructional sequences for the purpose of making decisions or providing opportunity for reflection and action.

Although Lynch pointed out that the areas of language assessment and program evaluation overlap, the author proposed that answers to the following questions would help distinguish between assessment and evaluation. Two questions that are related to assessment are: "Is this student ready for the next level of instruction? What can we say about this student's proficiency in language?" (Lynch, 2003, p. 20). The following two questions concern evaluation: "Is this programme achieving its objectives? What links can be discovered between the processes of this programme and the achievement of its students?" (Lynch, 2003, p. 20).

In summary, whereas language programs conduct assessment on individual language learning, evaluation addresses phenomena common to the program. In conducting evaluation, it is important to use a shared vocabulary to avoid linguistic breakdowns and communication failures (Sullivan, 2006) to avoid "risk talking at cross purposes, missing the point, and further alienating teachers and learners" (Norris, 2006, p. 578).

The Purpose of Evaluation

Program evaluation carries a range of purposes that determine the choice of the approach to be used (Lynch, 2003). Two general types of purposes exist: program accountability and program development (Weir & Roberts, 1994). Accountability-oriented evaluation is the one with which the evaluators can

> usually examine the effects of program or project at significant end points of an educational cycle and is usually conducted for the benefit of an external audience or decision maker. … Development-oriented evaluation is designed to improve the quality of a program as it is being implemented" (Richards, 2001, p. 288).

Cohen (1994) also discussed two types of purposes for program evaluation: administrative and instructional. Whereas administrative purposes concern how to organize or develop a program, instructional purposes focus on the effectiveness of particular components of the language program. Scriven (1967) discussed *summative* and *formative* evaluation. Most instructors and program administrators are familiar with summative evaluation, because they adopt this form of evaluation to check the worth or value of the curriculum and make decisions about the curriculum; with this evaluation, evaluators can determine program effectiveness, efficiency, and acceptability (Richards, 2001). Educators conduct summative evaluation after implementing a program to answer the following questions:

- How effective was the course? Did it achieve its aims?
- What did the students learn?
- How well was the course received by students and teachers?
- Did the materials work well?

- Were the objectives adequate or do they need to be revised?
- Were the placement and achievement tests adequate?
- Was the amount of time spent on each unit sufficient?
- How appropriate were the teaching methods?
- What problems were encountered during the course? (Richards, 2001, p. 292)

Educators need to identify criteria for effectiveness to determine whether a course is working well (Richards, 2001). Various measures to determine the effectiveness of a course can rest on different purposes. The examples of measures include mastery of objectives, performance on tests, measures of acceptability, retention rate or reenrollment rate, and efficiency of the course (Richards, 2001). Educators conduct summative evaluation at the end of the term or cycle to make an ultimate judgment about the worth of the program, or to determine whether the program has successfully accomplished its objectives (Lynch, 2003).

Educators conduct formative evaluation, in contrast, to determine which parts of the program process work well and what problems educators need to address (Richards, 2001). The following questions relate to formative evaluation:

- Has enough time been spent on particular objectives?
- Have the placement tests placed students at the right level in the program?
- How well is the textbook being received?
- Is the methodology teachers are using appropriate?
- Are teachers or students having difficulties with any aspect of the course?

- Are students enjoying the program? If not, what can be done to improve their motivation?
- Are students getting sufficient practice work? Should the workload be increased or decreased?
- Is the pacing of the material adequate? (Richards, 2001, p. 288)

Educators can use information collected for formative evaluation to identify ongoing problems, make revisions, and improve the program (Richards, 2001). Educators conduct formative evaluation when it is necessary to make decisions about the ongoing nature of a program; for example, formative evaluation allows educators to observe which parts of the curriculum are working and which should be revised (Lynch, 2003). Educators conduct this form of evaluation while the program is being implemented and developed, with a goal to make recommendations for changes to improve the quality of the program with a focus on program processes (Lynch, 2003).

Thus, whereas summative evaluation corresponds to the purposes for program accountability (Cohen 1994; Weir & Roberts, 1994), the features of formative evaluation correspond to program development and instructional purposes. Because the information collected for program evaluation will be diverse, based on the purpose of the evaluation itself, it is essential for program evaluators to clarify their purposes or motivations before initiating evaluation procedures.

The Curriculum Objectives

Opportunities to listen, read, produce language, and interact in the second language are important for students, allowing them to observe the unique grammatical and sociolinguistic features of the foreign language and use these features properly when

communicating in it (Snow, 2014). However, these steps that students take before they start communicating in the foreign language do not happen incidentally; teachers need to plan for effective integrated instruction "through the design of explicit language and content objectives" as well as learning strategy objectives or study-skill objectives that help students become active learners (Snow, 2014, p. 447). Objectives should be consistent with the curriculum aim, and it is these objectives that determine the learning outcomes (Richards, 2001).

Learning Outcomes

Norris (2006) comments on the recent Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment movement in higher education accreditation, and discussed three impetuses that go in the direction of assuring educational effectiveness. The first impetus is that U.S. regional accreditation bodies have asked institutions, departments, and faculty to gather evidence to show students are learning what they are supposed to learn based on the programs and institutions to which they belong, and to use the evidence internally to make decisions or revise program practices. The second impetus is the public-accountability and assessment movement, described as follows:

> Though most closely associated with *No Child Left Behind* legislation and testing in K–12 public education, its effects are beginning to be felt in higher education as well. Within this line, publicly funded programs must be subject to regular measurement of their outcomes according to criteria external to the programs themselves, typically via standardized assessments tapping outcomes that are purportedly generic across programs. By holding colleges to external standards

> that are measured efficiently, accountability will ensure that consumers get what they pay for, or so the reasoning goes. (Norris, 2006, p. 577)

Although neither the accreditation organization nor the accountability movement invented the notion of outcome, it is the outcome of a program that provides the clearest indication of the value of the program in program-evaluation theory (Norris, 2006). Educators can use outcomes as "the form of valued learning targets [connected to] individual courses, sequences of courses, co-curricular experiences, and program completion [providing] the most important piece of the overall program design [that indicate] the specific results expected from participation in a program" (Norris, 2006, p. 577). The results include the knowledge students gain, the skills or abilities they acquire, and the dispositions, attitudes, or awareness they develop. Therefore, educators can use SLOs "as the touchstone for curriculum development, instructional practice, learner advancement and achievement, and program evaluation and improvement" (p. 577). Moreover,

> specification of the outcomes of college foreign-language programs provides us with a decisive opportunity to state who we are, why we exist, what our value is to learners, institutions, and society, and quite frankly, why we should not be shut down and why we should play a serious role in any comprehensive approach to a truly liberal education. (Norris, 2006, p. 577)

it is indispensable to indicate factors such as the purpose of the evaluation, the curriculum objectives, and the specific learning outcomes when conducting program evaluation, because studies that lack those factors lead to biased and untrustworthy results, even when researchers spend a tremendous amount of time and effort.

Although the practice of language-program evaluation is essential for all language programs,

> It is universally recognized as an essential part of any educational endeavor, it is the component about which most classroom practitioners generally claim the least knowledge, and is the one area of the curriculum about which many teachers express a lack of confidence. (Nunan, 1988, p. 116)

The OPI at the national level allows many foreign-language faculty members to play an active role as leaders in the area of student performance assessment; the OPI enables them to "understand and participate in university-wide discussions on authentic assessment and performance assessment" even though "foreign language departments at the postsecondary level have a checkered past when it comes to assessment" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 590). Norris (2006, p. 576) proposed that college foreign-language educators would be isolated in the academy if they continue to teach while complacent about taking action to understand, improve, and demonstrate quality work. Indeed, it is an urgent necessity as well as a responsibility for educators to make more precise academic contributions in the field of language program evaluation.

Theory of Language-Program Evaluation

Researchers who conduct evaluation on language-education programs should make efforts to tailor their evaluation to specific concerns (Lynch, 1990). Lynch (1990, 1996) formulated and introduced the concept of CAM for language-program evaluation, and demonstrated an interrelationship between the design of research, assessment, and evaluation (Lynch, 2003). The CAM consists of seven steps: (a) audience and goals, (b) context inventory, (c) preliminary thematic framework, (d) data-collection

design/system, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, and (g) evaluation report. These seven steps constitute one of the frameworks of this study.

Communicative Competence

Hymes (1967) introduced the term *communicative competence*, arguing against the linguistic theory proposed by Chomsky (1965), and emphasized the importance of the functional role of language. Educators commonly adopted the term in the pedagogical framework in the 1970s. It continues to influence the practice and theory of second-language and foreign-language teaching.

Competence and Performance

Chomsky (1965) discussed grammatical competence and performance, defining competence as the knowledge of the language that the speaker and hearer possess, and performance as the actual language use observed in concrete situations. For Chomsky, linguistic performance reflects competence only in ideal situations, because natural speech consists of numerous divergences such as "false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on" (1965, p. 4). Chomsky's described these beliefs as they derive from the following linguistic theory:

> Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3)

Chomsky considered linguistic competence as the knowledge of people who interact with each other and perform the actual use of language; performance directly reflects competence only under ideal settings.

Hymes criticized Chomsky's linguistic theory and the tendency to dismiss or ignore the functional role of the language:

> Sometimes as a matter of simplifying assumption, sometimes as a matter of principle, linguistic theory has been almost exclusively concerned with the nature of a single homogeneous code, shared by a single homogeneous community of users, and (by implication) used in a single function, that of referential statement. (1967, pp. 10–11)

Hymes opposed the ideal speaker–listener concept used by Chomsky, opining that the ideal speaker and listener do not exist. Furthermore, the concept of performance used by Chomsky "omits almost everything of sociocultural significance" (Hymes, 1972, p. 280).

Sociolinguistics Issues

The communicative role of a language and social values differ across communities: "communities have a plurality of languages (or code-varieties)," and that languages used in the communities have "a plurality of roles" (Hymes, 1967, p. 8). Hymes (1967) defined a speech community as the one in which people share rules for conducting and interpreting speech acts, and have at least one common linguistic code for interpreting the rules. People of different communities adopt different patterns of code-repertoire and code-switching with regard to their beliefs and values, and reflect those patterns in language use. In contrast to Chomsky, Hymes was concerned with language used in a social setting, and the concept of competence is "both tacit *knowledge* and

ability for use" (Savignon, 1997, p. 18). Anthropological linguists hold interest in "the integration of linguistic theory with a more general theory of communication and culture" (Savignon, 1997, p. 17).

During the stages in which children acquire a particular language, they master not only linguistic codes, but also social rules. Children can tell which linguistic code they should use and when they should talk or stop talking according to social rules, even though they are often "confronted not only with more than one code, but also with more than one system for the use of the codes" (Hymes, 1967, p. 16). Through the communicative experiences people share since childhood, they develop the communicative competence to know when to speak, when to remain silent, which code to use, and when, where, and with whom they should use the code.

A Pedagogical Perspective on Communicative Competence

Since Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence in the mid-1960s, the term has gained popularity among instructors, researchers, and other people who work in the field of second-language and foreign-language pedagogy. Since the mid-1970s, language specialists started adopting the term and developed the idea that they should teach second language/foreign language for communication, and eventually contributed to developing communicative language teaching (CLT). However, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) formalized a pedagogical framework on the notion of communicative competence. The essential aspects of this theoretical framework are the nature of communication, the distinction between communicative competence and actual communication, and the main components of communicative competence.

The Four Components of Communicative Competence Developed by Canale and Swain

Communicative competence concerns the knowledge and the skills people use when interacting with others in actual communication (Canale & Swain, 1980). *Knowledge* references what one knows about language and other aspects of communicative language use, whereas *skill* refers to how well one can perform this knowledge in actual communication. Canale (1983, pp. 3–4) summarized the features of communication discussed by Breen and Candlin (1980), Morrow (1977), and Widdowson (1978) as follows:

(a) It is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction;

(b) It involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message;

(c) It takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances;

(d) It is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions;

(e) It always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise);

(f) It involves authentic, as opposed to text-contrived language; and

(g) It is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

Second-language educators have accepted the concept of the nature of communication and use it as a tool to evaluate students' communicative competence (Canale 1983).

Although the distinction between communicative competence and actual communication is not fully understood in the second-language field, communicative competence is an essential part of actual communication, even though it appears indirectly and imperfectly due to "limiting psychological and environmental conditions such as memory and perceptual constraints, fatigue, nervousness, distractions and interfering background noises" (Canale, 1983, p. 5). The notion of skill, which refers to how well one can express knowledge in actual situations, requires a distinction between competence (underlying capacities) and its manifestation in actual communication (concrete situations; Canale, 1983).

Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) proposed four components of communicative competence: (a) grammatical competence, (b) sociolinguistic competence, (c) discourse competence, and (d) strategic competence. Successful communication requires all these components.

The first component of communicative competence is grammatical competence, which refers to one's ability to form and use grammatically correct expressions for communication. This competence concerns basic linguistic rules such as syntactically correct patterns, morphologically appropriate inflections, proper lexicons, comprehensible phonological system, and recognizable orthography. This competence allows a native speaker of a particular language to immediately recognize whether an utterance or sentence is grammatically acceptable. Because this competence focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to accurately comprehend and express the literal meaning of utterances, grammatical competence is a significant concern for any second-language/foreign-language program (Canale, 1983).

According to Wardhaugh's (2010, p. 1) definition, "a language is what the member of a particular society speaks." Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 3) described human communication as follows:

> Human communication fulfills many different goals at the personal and social levels. We communicate information, ideas, beliefs, emotions, and attitudes to one another in our daily interactions, and we construct and maintain our positions within various social contexts by employing appropriate language forms and performing speech activities to ensure solidarity, harmony, and cooperation, or to express disagreement or displeasure.

In comparing the acquisition of communication skills in one's first language and in learning another language, whereas native speakers acquire the basic skills quite early in life (even though it is a lifelong process), foreign-language learners must add different communication modes to their native-language strategies and change to readjust their strategies to fit the new language and culture (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Although monocultural communication rests on similarity, since "common language, behavior patterns, and values form the base upon which members of the culture exchange meaning with one another in conducting their daily affairs," intercultural communication that happens "between people of different cultures cannot allow the easy assumption of similarity" (Bennett, 1998, p. 2). Thus, intercultural communication among people who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds may involve communication risks such as misunderstandings or even conflicts if interlocutors lack intercultural-communication skills.

The second component of communicative competence is sociolinguistic competence, which allows a speaker to use language that is not only grammatically but also socially and culturally appropriate (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). This competence often refers to the appropriate use of levels of formality and politeness, lexicons that indicate the gender of speaker, kinship terms, and the display of the correct attitude when communicating with others. For example, when native speakers in Japan have verbal communication with others, before uttering, they automatically check for several factors that affect the speech styles they will adopt; those factors are level of acquaintance, social status of the speaker and the addressee, age difference, and place in which the conversation occurs. Those factors affect the choice by conversation participants of speech styles that show different levels of formality and politeness. For instance, when two people speak to each other in a business situation, the speaker who has a lower status must use nouns and verbs that have formality and politeness markers. When the subordinate addresses the superior in a business context, the polite title equivalent to Mr., Mrs., or Ms. in English is no longer proper, and the speaker should use the last name together with the addressee's business title, such as president or vice president. Similarly, when a younger speaker speaks to an older addressee, he or she must use polite expressions showing respect to the elder. In this situation neither the equivalent to *you* in English nor the elder's last name with a polite title such as Mr., Mrs., or Ms. is considered appropriate; rather, speakers commonly use the kinship terms for uncle, aunt, grandfather, and grandmother, depending on the age of the addressee. In the case of interaction with intimate people, speakers use not only an informal speech style, but also a lexicon that implies the gender of the speaker. Because linguistic marks connect to the

speaker's gender, if a male speaker utters linguistic expressions commonly used by female speakers, it is considered peculiar. It is also important to understand nonverbal communication; this includes knowing when to be quiet, taking turns, engaging in eye contact, and using the appropriate body language. As these examples show, one must adopt appropriate linguistic expressions that are bound to the social and cultural rules of the society in which one interacts with others.

The third component of communicative competence is discourse competence (Canale, 1980; Canale & Swain, 1980). One part of discourse is an instance of spoken or written language that has describable internal relationships of form and meaning (e.g., words, structures, cohesion) that relate coherently to an external communicative function or purpose and a given audience/interlocutor (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Discourse concerns one's skills to connect grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text; cohesion in form and coherence in meaning are necessary, using "devices such as pronouns, synonyms, ellipses, conjunctions, and parallel structure" (Canale, 1983, p. 9) to help us understand what is said logically and chronologically. In contrast, "coherence refers to the relationships among the different meanings in a text, where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions, and attitudes" (Canale, 1983, p. 9). The dialogue below is an example of cohesion:

Speaker A: Why didn't you come to the party yesterday?

Speaker B: Oh, it's because I didn't feel well yesterday.

Speaker A: I'm sorry to hear that. Are you alright now?

Speaker B: Yes, I am fine now.

All questions and answers in this dialogue are logically and chronologically connected, and one can clearly understand the meaning of each utterance because this dialogue consists of two questions and answers that are structurally and semantically bound.

The next dialogue is an example of coherence:

Speaker A: That cake really looks good. [Implies that A wants to eat the cake]

Speaker B: You are on a diet. [The accusatory tone implies that A should not eat the cake]

Speaker A: Oh, well, that's true. [Implies that A accepts B's accusation]

In this dialogue, each utterance is not grammatically cohesive, but taken together, they form a coherent discourse. This exchange makes no sense if one interprets each sentence literally; however, one can understand the meaning of this conversation because of the coherence of the underlying information the speakers share.

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 11) wrote that "human communication relies quite heavily on context and on the shared knowledge." They defined context as "all the factors and elements that are nonlinguistic and nontextual but which affect spoken or written communicative interaction," and shared knowledge as the one that interactants have with respect to a variety of contextual features" (p. 11). Duranti and Goodwin (1992) proposed four types of context: "1. Setting (physical and interactional); 2. Behavioral environment (nonverbal and kinetic); 3. Language (co-text and reflexive use of language); 4. Extrasituational (social, political, cultural, and the like)" (as cited in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000, p. 12).

Setting and language are the most important among those four elements; the setting is the "situational context such as the purpose, the participants, and the physical and temporal setting where communication is taking place," and the co-text is "the stream of prior and subsequent language in which a language segment or an exchange occurs" (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 12). A shared knowledge about setting and language allows people to successfully communicate with others.

The last component of communicative competence is strategic competence, which one uses when communicating with others for two reasons. First, even when speakers hit a wall in the midst of an actual communication due to their insufficient knowledge and skill in the areas of grammar, sociolinguistics, or discourse, they can manage to avoid a communication breakdown because they know how to compensate for the lack of communicative ability (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). For example, if a speaker of English as a second language (ESL) forgets or has not mastered a cohesion device such as *because* in "Because I had a fever yesterday, I was absent from school," he or she can use a different discourse device with the same meaning and say, "I had a fever yesterday. So, I was absent from school." If this person has a lexical problem with the word *absent*, he or she can say, "I didn't go to school yesterday" rather than "I was absent from school yesterday." The second reason one uses strategic competence is to "enhance the effectiveness of communication" (Canale, 1983, pp. 10–11): For example, a person may speak slowly and softly for rhetorical effect. According to Hadley (2001, pp. 6–7), this component of communicative competence is different from the others because it concerns the use of "effective strategies in negotiating meaning," such as "paraphrasing through circumlocution or approximations, using gestures, and asking others to repeat or

to speak more slowly." Strategic competence activates language users' knowledge of the other competencies, helping them compensate for "gaps or deficiencies in knowledge when they communicate" (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 16).

1995 Model of Communicative Competence Proposed by Celce-Murcia et al.

In 1995, Celce-Murcia et al. proposed a new model of communicative competence. In Celce-Murcia's (2007, p. 44) words, "the various components of communicative competence were interrelated and … it was important to properly describe the nature of these interrelationships in order to fully understand the construct of communicative competence." Celce-Murcia et al. changed the terms *grammatical competence* and *sociolinguistic competence* coined by Canale and Swain (1980) into *linguistic competence* and *sociocultural competence*, respectively. The change to *linguistic competence* avoided the possible ambiguity of *grammatical competence,* because this component includes not only lexicon and phonology but also morphology and syntax. *Sociocultural competence* replaced *sociolinguistic competence* to distinguish the term from *actional competence,* which was added to the Canale and Swain model. Celce-Murcia et al. conceptualized actional competence as one with which one can convey and understand "communicative intent by performing and interpreting speech acts and speech act sets" (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 11). Citing Austin and Urmson's 1975 work, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) explained that people of all cultures use speech acts to perform social functions, and most languages have performative verbs with which one can convey speech acts such as "apologize, complain, compliment, request, promise, and so forth" (p. 24). Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) further explained the reason they used two separate terms, *sociocultural competence* and *actional competence*:

> We felt that within a broadly conceived pragmatic/sociolinguistic complex it was useful to separate the dimension associated with actional intent from that associated with sociocultural factors. The frequency of language functions in real-life communication has resulted in a wide range of conventionalized forms, sentence stems, formulaic expressions and strategies in every language, and thus a speaker with a developed sense of actional competence is in command of a wide repertoire of such chunks as well as rules and norms that are associated with an awareness of contextual variables (p.24).

Two components of actional competence are knowledge of language functions and knowledge of speech act sets (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). The subcategories of knowledge of language functions are interpersonal exchange, information, opinions, feelings, suasion, problems, and future scenarios. For sociocultural competence, four subcategories are social contextual factors, stylistic appropriateness factors, cultural factors, and nonverbal communicative factors. Discourse competence is the core or central competency:

> In our opinion, the core of central competency in the Canale and Swain framework is discourse competence since this is where everything else comes together: It is in discourse and through discourse that all of the other competencies are realized. And it is in discourse and through discourse that the manifestation of the other competencies can best be observed, researched, and assessed. (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 16)

2007 Model of Communicative Competence Revised by Celce-Murcia

Celce-Murcia (2007) presented a revised model of communicative competence that would play an important role in language teaching. The updated model consists of six components: (a) sociocultural competence, (b) discourse competence, (c) linguistic competence, (d) formulaic competence, (e) interactional competence, and (f) strategic competence. "Sociocultural competence refers to the speaker's pragmatic knowledge" with which a speaker can convey what he or she wants to say appropriately "within the overall social and cultural context of communication" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). A speaker's social or cultural error would be far more problematic than a linguistic error made during oral communication. It is especially challenging for second- and foreign-language instructors to help students develop sociocultural competence because most instructors have a better knowledge of linguistic rules than a sociocultural knowledge of the target language (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Three components—social contextual factors, stylistic appropriateness, and cultural factors—are the most crucial in the new model of communicative competence. Age, gender, status, social distance of conversation participants, and their relationships to each other, such as power and effect are examples of social contextual factors. Stylistic appropriateness concerns are how one expresses politeness, a sense of genres, registers, and cultural factors related to background knowledge of the target language group, major dialects/regional differences, and cross-cultural awareness (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.46). Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p.5) explained that the purpose of communication, types of audience, conventionalized style, and format affect *genre*, and *register* means engaged in level of formality.

The second competence is discourse competence, which determines whether speakers are competent to select appropriate words, put the words in proper sequence, and arrange the words to form suitable structures and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message (Celce-Mucia, 2007, p.46). Four subareas of discourse competence are (a) cohesion, (b) deixis, (c) coherence, and (d) generic structure. Cohesion arises when speakers use various cohesive ties to link words (lexical chain) or to form a sentence (grammatical ties; Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Four types of grammatical ties discussed by Celce-Murcia (2007) are anaphora and cataphora, substitution, ellipses, and conjunction. These subarea of discourse competence concern learners' ability to develop lexically and grammatically appropriate linguistic expressions. Deixis is a situational reference (Celce-Murcia, 2001), expressed through the use of personal pronouns (*he, she, we, they*), spatial terms (*here/there; this/that*), temporal terms (*now/then; before/after*), and textual reference (e.g., *the following table, the figure above;* Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.47). As discussed previously in this chapter, "coherence refers to the relationships among the different meanings in a text, where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions, and attitudes" (Canale, 1983, p.9). Speakers are coherent when they express their purpose or intent through an appropriate context, when they manage old and new information, and when they maintain temporal continuity and other organizational features through conventionally recognized meanings (Celce-Murcia, 2007). The last subarea of discourse competence is generic structure. This subarea concerns a speaker's competence to identify spoken discourse by using categories such as "a conversation, narrative, interview, service encounter, report, lecture, sermon, etc." (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.47).

The third competence introduced by Celce-Murcia (2007) is linguistic competence. This includes four types of knowledge: (a) phonological, (b) lexical, (c) morphological, and (d) syntactic. Phonological knowledge allows communicators to understand the sound system of a language used for communication, and to adopt appropriate sounds including segmentals and suprasegmentals. Examples of segmentals are vowels, consonants, and syllable types; suprasegmentals are prominence or stress, intonation, and rhythm. With lexical knowledge, one can identify content words such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives and by the functions of words such as pronouns, determiners, prepositions, and verbal auxiliaries. Examples of morphological knowledge are parts of speech, grammatical inflections, and productive derivational processes (Celce-Murcia, 2007). When using syntactic knowledge, which consists of constituent or phrase structure, word order, basic sentence types, modification, coordination, subordination, and embedding, one is competent to develop syntactically well-organized spoken and written expressions.

The fourth competence Celce-Murcia (2007) introduced is formulaic competence, which operates as a counterbalance to linguistic competence: Whereas linguistic competence allows a speaker to develop phonologically, lexically, morphologically, and syntactically well-organized expressions, formulaic competence requires a speaker to use fixed and conventional linguistic expressions when interacting with others. According to Celce-Murcia (2007), the work conducted by Pawley and Snyder (1983), Pawley (1992), and Nattinger and De Carrico (1992) brought this area to general attention. The components that belong to formulaic competence are routines, collocations, idioms, and lexical frames. Examples of the components are routines that consist of fixed phrases

such as *of course, all of a* sudden; formulaic segments, *How do you do? I'm fine, thanks.* and *how are you?*; collocations, including verb-object such as *spend money*, *play the piano,* and adverb-adjective like *statistically significant* and *mutually* intelligible; adjective-noun like *tall building* and *legible handwriting*; idioms such as *to kick the* bucket, which means *to die* and *to get the ax* meaning *to be fired* or terminated; and lexical frames are *I'm looking for* and *See you later* (Celce-Murcia, 2007). The importance of formulaic competence has been growing since fluent speakers of a language use formulaic knowledge, often compared to systematic linguistic knowledge when speaking a target language (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 48).

The fifth competence in Celce-Murcia's (2007) model of communicative competence is interactional competence, which has three subcomponents: (a) actional competence, (b) conversational competence, and (c) nonverbal/paralinguistic competence. For actional competence, one can perform common speech acts. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2001) defined speech acts as social actions performed through utterances. The sets of speech acts involved when interactions happen are information exchanges; interpersonal exchanges; expression of opinions and feelings; problems such as complaining, blaming, regretting, and apologizing; and future scenarios like hopes, goals, promises, and prediction. Conversational competence is the competence with which a speaker can open and close conversation, establish and change topics, interrupt a conversation, and collaborate on conversation with conversation participants, functioning as a listener verbally and nonverbally. Nonverbal or paralinguistic competence requires communication participants to understand and adopt the following features properly when communicating: body language, nonverbal turn-taking signals, backchannel

behaviors, gestures, affect markers, eye contact, use of space, touching, and use of nonlinguistic utterances with interactional import such as *ahhh! Uh-oh,* and *Huh?* (Celce-Murcis, 2007). Interactive competence is very important because the performance of speech acts and speech-act sets in different languages vary, and it is important for conversation carriers to know the norm of the performance for successful communication (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.49).

The last component of communicative competence discussed by Celce-Murcia (2007) is strategic competence. Learners who have developed good strategic competence can use strategies effectively when communicating, and have a tendency to learn languages better and faster than those who have not yet built this competence. Two strategies are learning strategies and communication strategies. Three of Oxford's (2001) learning strategies are most important; cognitive, metacognitive, and memory-related. One can learn a new language better with cognitive strategies because this type of strategy stimulates the learner to make use of logic and analysis, and to develop skills to outline, summarize, take notes, organize, and review materials effectively (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Metacognitive strategies relate to learners' self-discipline and positive attitude for learning because one must make effective plans for homework and preparation to monitor how learning has progressed, to analyze errors made, and to accept feedback from teachers and classmates for positive progress. Even when encountering situations when learners' insufficient lexical knowledge for managing communication become an obstacle, a learner who developed good metacognitive strategies can find solutions by guessing meanings of words through context or the linguistic function of the word. With

memory-related strategies, learners can recall or retrieve missing words by using clues such as acronyms, images, and sounds (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Communication strategies include achievement, stalling or time gaining, self-monitoring, interacting, and social (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Achievement strategies involve the use of approximation, circumlocution, code-switching, and miming; stalling or time-gaining strategies emerge when communication participants adopt phrases such as *Where was I? Could you repeat that?*; in using self-monitoring strategies, a speaker can use expressions like *I mean* ..... with which the speaker can repair what has been said; with interacting strategies, interlocultors can ask for help or clarification involving meaning negotiation, comprehension, and confirmation checks; in using social strategies, learners actively seek opportunities to practice the target language with native speakers or use the target language.

In the last part of the discussion on what the 2007 revised model implies for language pedagogy, Celce-Murcia (2007) mentioned the importance of culture, the importance of discourse and context, the need to balance language as system and language as formula, the need to focus on dynamic aspects of interaction, and the need to focus on strategies from time to time.

Communicative Language Teaching

The theoretical framework for communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) has greatly influenced many scholars who strive to understand what communicative language proficiency involves (Hadley, 2001). Although language teaching focuses on students acquiring proficiency, it was only a couple of decades ago that foreign-language educators started using the term proficiency; before then, the

concept of foreign-language proficiency was described as structural accuracy. However, after the CLT movement of the 1970s, many teachers understood language proficiency as a concept that is "comprised of a whole range of abilities that must be described in a graduated fashion in order to be meaningful" rather than as a monolithic concept that represents "an amorphous ideal that students rarely attain" (Hadley, 2001, pp. 8–9). In the late 1970s the notion of communicative competence was introduced in foreign-language study "as a reaction against a pedagogic tradition that favored the memorization of grammatical paradigms and the word-for-word translation of decontextualized sentences" as well as "an audiolingual instructional approach often referred to as drill and kill" (Kramsch, 2006, p. 249).

Communicative language teaching is an approach to language teaching emphasizing that students learn a language to communicate with others (Duff, 2014). Savignon (1971) used the term communicative competence to characterize the ability of classroom language learners.

Communicative Competence as a Framework for College Foreign Language Study

Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 41) observed that "the term communicative competence has been in circulation for about forty years and has been used extensively in justification and explications of communicative language teaching." A question then arises: Is communicative competence suitable and achievable as a framework for college foreign-language study? This section reviews problems observed in the discussions of communicative competence as a framework for college foreign-language study, highlighting in particular the deficits identified by Byrnes (2006), Kramsch (2006), and Schulz (2006).

In an article on "the central questions about the role of foreign languages in higher education and the educational purposes, goals, and outcomes of [foreign-language] study," Byrnes (2006, p. 244) pointed out two problematic areas: (a) a focus on oral language use is rarely considered desirable or indispensable; and (b) terms such as communicative language teaching, communicative competence, proficiency, proficiency-oriented instruction, and standards are often wrongly used as synonyms. Regarding the first problematic area pointed out by Byrnes, Savignon (2002, p. 4) commented:

> Current efforts at educational reform favor essay writing, in-class presentation, and other more holistic assessments of learner competence. Some programs have initiated portfolio assessment, the collection and evaluation of learners' poems, reports, stories, videotapes, and similar projects in an effort to represent and encourage learner achievement.

Savignon (2002, p. 5) also mentioned the language teachers' different reactions to communicative language teaching:

> Some feel understandable frustration at the seeming ambiguity in discussions of communicative ability. Negotiation of meaning may be a lofty goal, but this view of language behavior lacks precision and does not provide a universal scale for assessment of individual learners. Ability is viewed, rather, as variable and highly dependent on context and purpose as well as on the roles and attitudes of all involved. Other teachers welcome the opportunity to select or develop their own materials, providing learners with a range of communicative tasks. They are comfortable relying on more global, integrative judgments of learning progress.

Swaffar (2006, p. 246) pointed out that the term *communicative competence* "gradually became the consensus position on how to teach [foreign languages] at initial levels" and "changed the pedagogical emphasis of audiolingual approaches." Breen and Candlin (1980, p. 90) wrote that "language learning is learning how to communicate as a member of a particular socio-cultural group." Byrnes (2006) also emphasizes that the notion of communicative competence has come to align primarily with interactive, transactional oral language use in programmatic and pedagogical practice. However, Byrnes was critical of collegiate language departments that focus on the development of oral language skills that are neither articulated nor considered desirable and indispensable, although learners could develop creativity and personal styles, which are strongly encouraged in U.S. teaching practice. Byrnes (2006, p. 245) further stated educators have a propensity to separate foreign-language programs from literary/cultural content, and this separation might "sustain the long-standing bifurcation of foreign-language programs into language courses and content courses," causing negative consequences. Considering the current globalized and multilingual environment, and the foreign-language program goal to help all learners acquire professional-level language abilities, Byrnes commented that oral communicative approaches may "be creating conceptual and practical ceiling effects that need to be addressed" (p. 244). Moreover, Byrnes warned that a reconsideration of language-program goals and objectives is necessary in consideration of two facts. One is that the acquisition of the so-called less commonly taught languages, whose script and cultural contexts are very different from those commonly found in the United States, requires much more time and effort to reach a particular level of proficiency. Larson (2006) shared perplexity about the guidelines for oral proficiency

assessment and the OPI procedure published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Professor of Japanese Larson recalled starting to teach Japanese 20 years ago:

> What astonished me then was that Japanese (as well as other [less commonly taught languages]), for the first time that I could remember, was treated like any other (European) language. There was an inspiring confidence among leaders of OPI workshops that proficiency in Japanese could be analyzed with the same tools and vocabulary as those used for other languages and taught with the same goals in mind. (2006, p. 256)

The section of the Unger, Lorish, Noda, and Wada (1993) book titled "Do Not Expect Japanese to Be 'Just Another Foreign Language'" includes a warning:

> Administrators as well as teachers must be particularly alert to the unique features of Japanese as a subject of study for American students. Not only is Japanese one of the most linguistically difficult languages for native speakers of English to master, it is also used in a cultural setting radically different from anything found in American society.

The kinds of measures traditionally used in evaluating achievement in European languages therefore need to be adjusted when carried over to the case of Japanese. Reading the equivalent of a play by Molière or a novella by Goethe is not a realistic goal for a high school study of Japanese. It is an ambitious goal even for college undergraduates because mastery of the necessary aspects of the writing system, the special vocabulary, and grammar of literary language, requires a thorough knowledge of the basic structure of colloquial speech and its cultural setting. Another concept that

Byrnes (2006) believed should be part of a reconsideration of program goals and objectives is that the intermediate range of communicative abilities, which even in the commonly taught languages is achieved by students at the end of the language sequence, is "an achievement that can be had with a 1-semester study abroad sojourn" (2006, p. 244).

Byrnes (2006) expressed a second crucial concern about the role of foreign languages in higher education. The blurring of such terms as communicative language teaching, communicative competence, proficiency, proficiency-oriented instruction, and standards increases when communicative competence is treated as "a theoretical construct, an overarching learning goal, a pedagogical approach, even a criterion for assessment," or all of them at once (Byrnes, 2006, p. 245). Researchers must clearly define these terms when they use them to express their thoughts, concerns, and findings without ambiguities.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Kramsch (2006, p. 250) noted that people have defined communication as "the ability to exchange information speedily and effectively and to solve problems, complete assigned tasks, and produce measurable results" in the educational world. However, people must be competent, not merely efficient when communicating with others in a global age because language learners are more likely to encounter multilingual individuals who hold a variety of values and ideologies today than they were in the 1970s, when the notion of communicative competence was introduced in foreign-language study. Learners in the 1970s likely would encounter only monolingual native speakers belonging to national cultures that are more easily identifiable. Because of the more complex situations in which one is required to communicate with others in a

foreign language, Kramsch averred it is more important to think carefully about the nature and purpose of the task, rather than how one should achieve the task. Kramsch (2006) provided the following example of multilingual communication:

> For instance, if an Iraqi and an American engineer collaborate on the rebuilding of a bridge in Iraq, it is not enough for the American to be able to discuss in Arabic how best to rebuild that bridge. He needs to be able to discuss the very conditions of possibility of an Iraqi-American collaboration on the reconstruction of bridges in Iraq. He needs to know when to be communicatively competent and when it is more judicious to remain silent; how to rely on clues other than verbal ones to find out the intentions of his interlocutor; how to use his knowledge of Arabic and English, but also other languages as well, for their mutual benefit. But he also needs to know something of the history of the Middle East and its relationship to Western powers, as well as of the multilingual, multicultural Muslim world, in order to understand the silences, the hedges, the non sequiturs of his interlocutors. In short, rather than communicative strategies, he might need much more subtle semiotic practices that draw on a multiplicity of perceptual clues to make and convey meaning.

Kramsch (2006) emphasized these practices as necessary when one communicates with others who have a different power, status, and speaking rights, and that pride, honor, and face are important factors in communication. Kramsch also observed that one must understand what others "remember from the past, what they imagine and project onto the future, and how they position themselves in the present in order to understand others" (2006, p. 251). Because of this complexity, "it is not sufficient for learners to know how

to communicate meanings. … It is no longer appropriate to give students a tourist-like competence to exchange information with native speakers of national languages within well-defined national cultures," because they must develop a much more refined competence (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251). Educators must pay more attention to discourse, which is language in use, no matter in what modalities it occurs. Four modalities (spoken, written, visual, and electronic) focus on semiotic choice and interpreting meanings. The competence that college students need to acquire nowadays is a symbolic competence; therefore, educators should pay attention to form, genre, style, and register, which are social semiotics, and should carefully observe how linguistic form such as words are used by the speaker to represent his or her mind (Kramsch, 2006).

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 6) defined discourse *register* as "the level of formality or informality of an instance of discourse," and *genre* as "a culturally and linguistically distinct form of discourse, such as narrative (e.g., a story), exposition (e.g., a research report), procedural discourse (e.g., a recipe), and so on." Brown (2007, p. 236) described styles as follows:

> Styles are not social or regional dialects, but sets of conventions for selecting words, phrases, discourse, and nonverbal language in specified contexts. Styles vary considerably within a single language user's idiolect. When you converse informally with a friend, you use a style that is different from what you use in an interview for a job with a prospective employer. Native speakers, as they mature into adulthood, learn to adopt appropriate styles for widely different contexts. An important difference between a child's and an adult's fluency in a native language is the degree to which an adult is able to vary styles for different occasions and

> persons. Adult second language learners must acquire stylistic adaptability in order to be able to encode and decode the discourse around them correctly.

Citing Levelt (1989) and Bygate (2001), Bohlke (2014) indicated three functions that produce speech: (a) conceptualization, (b) formulation, and (c) articulation. Conceptualization is "the mental process in which ambiguous or imprecise notions are made clear and more precise" and the speaker conveys information "based on the speaker's conceptual knowledge and other types of prior knowledge" (Bohlke, 2014, p. 122). After conceptualizing the information, the speaker expresses meaning through utterances consisting of linguistic forms such as grammar and words, and articulation happens. However, the articulated utterance (linguistic form) not only reveals the speaker's grammatical competence, but also conveys further information such as genre, style, and register, which are elements of social semiotics pointed out by Kramsch. (2006). Kramsch concluded that "language learners should slowly understand that communicative competence does not derive from information alone, but from the symbolic power that comes with the interpretation of signs and their multiple relations to other signs" (2006, p. 252).

Schulz (2006, p. 252) noted that communicative approaches to language teaching and learning great from the need of sociolinguists and language teachers

> to move from discrete-point structural analyses to language use in discourse, [and] they quickly gained popularity in the context of English as a second language instruction that had the goal of developing ESL learners' survival competence as rapidly as possible" (p. 252)

Schulz delineated the development of the current field of foreign-language learning as follows:

> Since the mid-1970s, the fields of second language (L2) learning (i.e., learning predominantly in naturalistic, target-language-use contexts) and foreign language (FL) learning (i.e., guided learning predominantly through formal classroom instruction) have espoused similar instructional goals and approaches and have emphasized similarities in learning processes in both types of language learning. (Schulz, 2006, p. 252)

Citing the argument that "if humans are endowed with an innate predisposition for language, then perhaps they should be able to learn as many languages as they need or want to, provided … that the time, circumstances and motivation are available," proposed by Mitchell and Myles (2004, p. 13), Schulz (2006) remarked that the vast majority of learners have the following problems to gain a meaningful and lasting level of language competence through classroom instruction: insufficient time, insufficient appropriate contexts, insufficient input, insufficient opportunities to interact for negotiating meanings with competent users of the target language, and insufficient motivation such as need. Moreover, educators should not consider second-language and foreign-language learning in the same way because learning contexts such as type of input, amount of input, and opportunities and need for output are extremely different in those two areas. What Schulz described is not the validity of theoretical principles of communicative language teaching, but "the goals of [foreign-language] requirement sequences" and explores "whether communicative approaches are most appropriate, efficient, and effective in accomplishing these goals" (2006, p. 252). The scholar emphasized that educators ignore

the purpose and role of foreign-language learning in general education requirements if they adopt the same goals and approaches of ESL instruction without thinking of the differences between contexts and between the two groups of learners. Although instruction based on the communicative approach provided in ESL or survival language classes focuses on the acquisition of appropriate language skills that learners can instantly use in real life situations, "curricular objectives, materials, and assessments for foreign-language requirements need to focus on goals beyond those of gaining survival competence in a new language" (p. 253).

According to Schulz, most postsecondary institutions in which foreign-language language study is considered important for general education offer courses for no more than 4 semesters (Schulz, 2006); Coleman (1929, as cited in Schultz, 2006) reported that it was theoretically and practically impossible for learners to develop a meaningful level of oral language proficiency with 2 years of language study in the classroom. Moreover, Schulz pointed out another negative feature of foreign-language education in the United States:

> The sad fact is that on the precollegiate level, 2-year [foreign-language] programs are the norm, 5-year programs are the exception, and U.S. school districts with well-articulated K–12 foreign language instruction are exceedingly rare. In other words, it is unlikely that many students will acquire and maintain advanced-level communication skills or cultural insights in our K–12 school systems or in [foreign-language] requirement courses on the postsecondary level. (2006, p. 253)

Schultz cited a report by Swender and Duncan (1999) showing that students who have studied commonly taught Indo-European languages can only achieve a level of

Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate-High (according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines) even after 12 years of school instruction. According to the ACTFL Provisional Revised Speaking Guidelines (Swender & Duncan, 1999, p. 9), an intermediate-level speaker is able to "produce relatively short, discrete sentences, ask simple questions, and handle straightforward survival situations in language which is basically in present time." Therefore, Schultz (2006, p. 253) raised the question, "Are communicative approaches and goals, that is, approaches based on nativist principles of language learning and survival language-use goals the most appropriate, sufficient, and effective in terms of learning outcomes in the general education language study sequence?"

Schultz (2006) took the stance that it is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for the general education foreign-language requirement to develop students' communicative competence, because the curriculum offers neither sufficient time in which students can develop the competence, nor an appropriate instructional context with which learners can develop meaningful communication skills and maintain level proficiency. Schultz also observed that educators should admit to students and to the public at large that students will not be able to maintain the low-level communication skills they typically achieve at the end of the required sequence unless they have opportunities to continue using the language:

> Notwithstanding the consequences of 9/11 and current awareness by our government of the need for multilingual and multicultural competence (especially in the languages important for national security) by a larger segment of the U.S. population than is currently the case, it is unrealistic to expect that [foreign-language] learning will become a priority goal in U.S. education for large

> numbers of learners. Unless long, well-articulated instructional sequences become the rule rather than the exception, both at the precollegiate and at the collegiate levels, we may want to focus on developing knowledge, insights, and critical discussion about the uniquely human phenomenon of language and its role in society, as well as attitudes toward language use and language learning, in addition to some basic communication skills that may or may not be eventually useful. (Schulz, 2006, p. 255)

In summary, Byrnes (2006), Schulz (2006), and Kramsch (2006) highlighted the following problems in the application of communicative competence as a framework for college-level foreign-language instruction. Byrnes pointed out two critical issues: First, although the notion of communicative competence primarily connects to interactive, transactional, and oral language use in programmatic and pedagogical practice, language departments in colleges rarely consider a focus on oral language use to be desirable or indispensable. Second, many researchers problematically treat as synonyms terms such as communicative language teaching, communicative competence, proficiency, proficiency-oriented instruction, and the standards. Kramsch argued that it is not sufficient for learners to know how to communicate meanings, but must develop the ability to interpret meanings from discourse features, dubbed symbolic competence. Schulz warned that it is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for the general education foreign-language requirement to develop communicative competence in language-requirement sequences because neither time nor instructional context is sufficient or appropriate to develop a meaningful and lasting level of proficiency. Therefore, Schulz suggested a reexamination

and rebalancing of the instructional goals and approaches in language-requirement sequences.

After reviewing the problems discussed by these three scholars, a question arises: Do students who study foreign languages at the government-sponsored institute where various foreign languages are taught for a specific purpose achieve communicative competence as well as the symbolic competence discussed by Professor Kramsch? The Institute has an intensive foreign-language curriculum that is quite different from that of most colleges in the United States. The main goal of the curriculum is to ensure that graduates who learn a specific foreign language at the Institute successfully accomplish their future work assignments in the target language.

This goal can compensate for the problem pointed out by Byrnes (2006). The mission of the Institute is to provide students with culturally based foreign-language education and training. This mission may offer a solution to the important issue discussed by Kramsch (2006). Finally, the Institute assigns students to a particular foreign language to study based on their score on the aptitude test, and they study the language for 6 to 7 hours a day, 5 days a week, for 26 to 64 training weeks, depending on the category of the assigned language. Schulz (2006, p. 252) noted,

> Unfortunately, in the case of [foreign-language] learning, the vast majority of learners have neither sufficient time, sufficient appropriate contexts, sufficient input, sufficient opportunities to interact (negotiate meaning) with competent users of the target language, nor sufficient motivation (i.e., need) to gain a meaningful and lasting level of language competence predominantly through classroom instruction.

Students at the Institute spend a greater amount of time studying a foreign language compared to regular college students. This difference in instruction duration might provide useful information about the problems raised by Schulz (2006). Due to the unique features of the Institute, the study of foreign-language instruction conducted at the Institute with communicative competence as a framework should provide useful information to explain the problems identified by the three scholars discussed above.

Summary

This chapter offered a discussion of two main areas: program evaluation and communicative competence. The section on program evaluation highlighted seven issues: (a) language curriculum; (b) language-program evaluation; (c) measurement, assessment, and evaluation; (d) the purpose of evaluation; (e) curriculum objectives; (f) learning outcomes; and (g) theory of language-program evaluation. In the section on communicative competence, I explored topics such as competence and performance, sociolinguistics issues, a pedagogical perspective on communicative competence, the four components of communicative competence, communicative language teaching, and communicative competence as a framework for college-level foreign-language study.

Evaluation is one of the components of language curriculum, and should be conducted occasionally to measure the effectiveness and needs of a program. However, the language program evaluation shows two deficits. As Lynch (1990), Beretta (1992), and Norris (2008, 2009) pointed out, one deficit is that very scarce literature on the evaluation of language-teaching programs has been available for almost 3 decades. According to Norris, the dearth of publications on language evaluation results from language teachers' belief that evaluation reports should be produced for evaluation clients

rather than for a broader academic public, or that evaluation should be done by external experts for mandated purposes. Lynch and Yang (2009) mentioned another deficit: that most available studies used evaluation narrowly and failed to address details. Thus, more studies on language-program evaluation that address the full range of concerns of the language-teaching program would be helpful to improve practices.

The importance of using proper terminologies and definitions is another issue often discussed, because many previous researchers use them in a complicated and ambiguous way. Although words such as measurement, assessment, and evaluation should be used differently, some researchers use the same term to indicate different meanings or adopt different terms to convey the same meaning. As Sullivan (2006) suggested, researchers should use a common vocabulary to avoid confusion or miscommunication.

Many studies on language-program evaluation failed to specify the purpose of the evaluation, the curriculum objectives, and the specific learning outcomes. When conducting program evaluation, all these factors are indispensable. When planning a program evaluation, a researcher chooses a particular approach based on the purposes of the evaluation. As Richards (2001) stated, educators define learning outcomes based on curriculum objectives. Therefore, unless researchers carefully review the objectives and specify the outcomes, the study will yield divergent results.

Language specialists have commonly adopted the term *communicative competence*, originally coined by Hymes (1967). In their pedagogical framework, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) introduced four components of communicative competence: (a) grammatical competence, (b) sociolinguistic competence, (c) discourse

competence, and (d) strategic competence. These components are indispensable for communicating with others successfully.

The idea that a second language/foreign language should be taught for communication eventually contributed to developing the CLT approach. CLT focuses on the idea that students learn a language for the purpose of communicating with others (Duff, 2014). Although educators have used communicative competence extensively to justify and explain communicative language teaching (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.41), several scholars wondered if communicative competence is suitable and achievable as a framework for college foreign-language study. These scholars described five problems in developing communicative competence in postsecondary schools: (a) a lesser emphasis by college language departments on the development of interactive, transactional, and oral language (Byrnes, 2006); (b) an instruction method that lets foreign-language learners develop a tourist-like competence (Kramsch, 2006); (c) insufficient instruction time (Schulz, 2006); (d) lack of appropriate contexts (Schulz, 2006); and (e) few opportunities for students to interact with native speakers of the target language (Schulz, 2006).

Based on the problems discussed in this chapter, the question arises: Are students learning foreign language at the Institute, where these five problems assume different forms, better able to develop communicative competence? This question could be answered by conducting language-program evaluations with special consideration for the problems discussed in the first part of this chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study investigated whether students of a government-sponsored Institute developed a level of communicative competence that allowed them to comfortably accomplish their work in Japan after 64 weeks of language study. Data accrued through a mixed-method survey and interviews. In the first section of this chapter, I restate the research purpose. In the second section, I explain the research design. In the third section I discuss the methods used, focusing on four components: participants, instruments, validity, and analysis.

In this study I examined four research questions:

1. How effective is the Japanese language program at the Institute in helping students build communicative competence?
2. Does the Institute provide a curriculum and cultural information that helps students build communicative competence?
3. What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?

Restatement of Purpose

Program evaluation can contribute to a better understanding of language-teaching practice and can help improve programs (Norris, 2009). To help language programs at the foreign-language Institute further improve, the purpose of this study is to examine

whether students who were assigned and studied Japanese at the Institute were able to develop better communicative competence by the time they finished their coursework. In the previous chapter, I discussed the following problems in developing communicative competence in postsecondary schools:

1. Lesser emphasis by college language departments on the development of interactive, transactional, and oral language;
2. An instruction method that lets foreign-language learners develop a tourist-like competence;
3. Insufficient instruction time;
4. Lack of appropriate contexts;
5. Few opportunities for students to interact with native speakers of the target language.

The Japanese curriculum at the Institute is very different from that of postsecondary schools, and students study the assigned foreign language without experiencing those problems. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explain the key factors that caused those problems and to observe the issues that arose from the differences in curriculum between the foreign language Institute and postsecondary schools.

Research Design

The research design is the plan or proposal for conducting research (Creswell, 2009). Program-evaluation design specifies how one should gather the information necessary to make decisions or judgments about the program (Lynch, 2003). Obviously, the choice of a method to collect data is a crucial one. The three most common methods

used for data collection are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Whereas quantitative research involves the observation of "amounts, or quantities, of one or more variables of interest," the concern of researchers who adopt the qualitative method is rather on "characteristics, or qualities, that cannot easily be reduced to numerical values" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 94). Mixed-method research, which uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, can provide information of greater strength than those conducted by either method alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). "The problems addressed by social and health science researchers are complex, and the use of either quantitative or qualitative approaches by themselves is inadequate to address this complexity" (Creswell, 2009, p. 203). Researchers can gain greater insight through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2009). Accordingly, in this study I have adopted a mixed-method approach.

The data collection for this study took place through two electronic surveys (see Appendices A & B) distributed to former students and Japanese instructors; these questionnaires included both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were rated based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree). The open-ended questions allowed respondents to express their opinions in their own words. To provide a rich context to the evaluation, I also interviewed six students and six instructors, chosen from among respondents to the survey. I interviewed the students individually and the six instructors as a focus group. All interviews used guided questions (see Appendices C & D). I audiorecorded the interviews and transcribed the data.

Survey Questions

The survey questions used for this study concern the four components of communicative competence developed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) and revised by Celce-Murcia (2007), as well as the quality of the learning materials used at the Institute, the amount of time dedicated to developing speaking skills, the teaching methodology used at the Institute, and the cultural information received by the students. The first set of questions asked about the linguistic competence developed by former students and their experiences with sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing. Using the same types of probes, the second set of questions focused on how former students felt about producing culturally appropriate utterances. A third set of questions covered students' confidence to utter sequentially appropriate expressions. The next part of the questionnaire queried the strategic competence former students developed and about the materials, time, and teaching methodology used in the Japanese program at the Institute.

In the questionnaire developed for instructors, the first set of questions asked for their opinions on the program's effectiveness in students' development of linguistic competence. The second set of questions asked the instructors how they felt about sociocultural competence developed by former students during the 64-weeks of language study. A third set of questions queried instructors' opinions on former students' competence to utter sequentially appropriate expressions. The last set of questions concerned how instructors thought of their former students' strategic competence.

Interview Questions

To receive greater feedback on the research questions, I interviewed six former students and six instructors who currently teach at the Institute. The questions that guided the interviews appear in Appendices C and D.

Methods

Participants

The procedure to select participants for this study was based on a quasiexperimental approach. I recruited participants to the two groups nonrandomly for this research. One group consisted of 35 graduates who studied Japanese at the Institute for 64 weeks. All those former students had achieved at least Level 2 on Reading and Listening Proficiency tests and level 1+ on OPI evaluations, based on ILR (2015); furthermore, those graduates either have lived in Japan or are staying in Japan working as security personnel. I directly contacted about half of the participants for this study before they graduated from the Institute. I explained the intention and purpose of this study to them, and they willingly provided their contact information. I identified additional survey participants with the help of several Japanese instructors who have been teaching Japanese at the Institute longer than me.

Before sending the survey questionnaire to former students of the Japanese program at the Institute, I contacted them by e-mail, explaining the purpose of the survey and asking them to provide their informed consent (see Appendix E) to receive the questionnaire. I organized the informed-consent form according to the 10 components listed by Fink (2009, p. 45): (a) a title of consent, such as “Consent to Participate in the Survey”; (b) the title of the survey; (c) the purpose of the survey; (d) the procedures that

would be taken; (e) potential risks or discomforts in answering the survey questions, (f) potential benefits of the survey, such as new knowledge or information necessary for developing program or policies; (g) information about whether participants would be paid; (h) information about confidentiality, such as whether the names of respondents would be kept confidential, what types of people would have access to the survey, how the received questionnaires would be kept, and with whom the survey conductor would share the results; (i) information about the possibility of withdrawing from the survey at any time; and (l) information about the person to contact to ask any questions about the survey. I have kept confidential the contact information for those respondents who consented to participate in the survey.

The second group of participants comprised 12 Japanese instructors who are currently teaching at the Institute or who have taught in the Japanese program for several years and are currently working at the Institute with a different assignment. The purpose of having a group of the instructors was to see whether I could discern any observable discrepancy or agreement between the instructors and the students. I followed the same procedures to recruit the instructors as I used to recruit former students. Appendix F shows the consent form provided to instructors. To protect all participants, I abided by the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Francisco.

Procedure

The following is an outline of the process of data collection:

Step 1: I contacted former students of Japanese and instructors at the Institute by e-mail, explaining the purpose of the survey and asking if they were willing to participate.

Step 2: I sent the informed-consent form and the survey questionnaire, developed using SurveyMonkey, by e-mail to students and instructors who replied positively to the first contact. I asked students and instructors to read and sign the consent form and to return the form and the questionnaire to me.

Step 3: I kept confidential all of the responses and analyzed them thoroughly.

Instruments

As stated above, this study used multiple methods of data collection. I sent two separate electronic surveys to former students and instructors, including closed- and open-ended questions. I designed the Likert-scale questions to answer the first two research questions: (a) How effective is the Japanese language program at the Institute in helping students build communicative competence? (b) Does the Institute provide a curriculum and cultural information that helps students build communicative competence? During the interviews, I focused on asking questions related to linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Closed-ended questions consisting of a simple *yes* or *no* might not capture the full reactions of the survey participants, so it is more appropriate to ask about the degree of the program's effectiveness (Orcher, 2007). Therefore, I used a Likert-type scale in addition to the yes/no responses for the closed-ended questions. Moreover, to explore the reason each informant chose a particular degree of effectiveness, the questionnaire also

included open-ended questions that asked how survey participants interpreted their experience in learning the Japanese language.

To contextualize the evaluation, I interviewed six students and six instructors chosen from those who had responded to the survey. I chose the six former students based on their willingness and availability to be interviewed, including geographical considerations. I interviewed the former students individually, because they work in different regions of the world now and could not be gathered together. I interviewed the six senior instructors, who have rich experience teaching a variety of adult students, as a focus group. I conducted all interviews using guided questions (see Appendices C & D). Researchers commonly use six types of questions in an interview: (a) experience and behavior, (b) opinion and values, (c) feeling, (d) knowledge, (e) sensory, and (f) background/demographics (Patton, 2002). Because I conducted the interviews for this study to get former learners' opinions about the effectiveness of the Japanese program at the Institute, the types of interview questions used for this study fall under the "opinion and values" category.

Merriam (2009, p. 99) stated, "good interview questions are open-ended and yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon." Examples of questions Merriam recommended are, "Tell me about a time when …" "Give me an example of …" "Tell me more about that …" and "What was it like for you when …" (Merriam, 2009, p. 99). Merriam also listed three types of questions to avoid: multiple, leading, and yes/no: "How do you feel about the instructors, the assignments, and the schedule of class?" "What emotional problems have you had since losing your job?" "Do you like the program?" and "Has returning to school been difficult?" (p. 100). It is important to use

probes or follow-up questions, asking "who, what, when, and where" when conducting an interview (Merriam, 2009, p. 101).

Validity

A survey is valid if the provided information accurately reflects "the respondents' knowledge, attitudes, values, and behavior" (Fink, 2009, p. 43). Fink (2009) listed four ways to ask about a published survey's validity:

1. Does the survey have predictive validity?
2. Does the survey have concurrent validity?
3. Does the survey have content validity?
4. Does the survey have construct validity?

The validity of quantitative methods depends on whether the researcher "can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores" on the survey instrument (Creswell, 2009, p. 149). Creswell described three traditional forms of validity. First, content validity, concerns whether "the items measure the content they were intended to measure"; the second, predictive or concurrent validity, concerns whether "scores predict a criterion measure" or if the "results correlate with other results"; last is construct validity, when researchers can see if "items measure hypothetical constructs or concepts" (2009, p. 149). Further, the establishment of "the validity of the scores in a survey helps to identify whether an instrument might be a good one to use in survey research" (Creswell, 2009, p. 149). Because answers to the first two research questions are either a simple yes or no, or different degrees of effectiveness measured on a Likert-type scale, the form of validity that draws meaningful and useful inferences from the results of the quantitative method

used in this research is content validity, which concerns whether "the items measure the content they were intended to measure" (Creswell, 2009, p. 149).

The concept of validity used in qualitative research is different from the one used in quantitative research, because with qualitative validity, "the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures" (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). The accuracy of the findings obtained through qualitative research is determined from the standpoint of the people who are involved in the study: the researcher, the participants, or the readers of the results (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Scholars aver that one of the strengths of qualitative research is validity, because validity rests on the determination of the accuracy of the findings. Creswell (2009) recommended a procedural perspective for research proposals: "to identify and discuss one or more strategies available to check the accuracy of the findings" (p. 191). Creswell listed eight primary validity strategies, and recommended the use of multiple strategies:

1. Triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes.
2. Use member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report, or specific descriptions, or themes, back to participants, and determining whether these participants feel that they are accurate.
3. Use rich, thick description to convey the findings.
4. Clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study.
5. Present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes.
6. Spend prolonged time in the field.

7. Use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account.

8. Use an external auditor to review the entire project. (pp. 191–192)

As suggested by Creswell, I adopted multiple strategies from these eight to conduct this study to verify the accuracy of the findings.

Reliability

Reliability is "the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured hasn't changed" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 29). In responding to the question "What is adequate reliability?" Fink (2009, p. 43) opined that "the criterion depends on the purpose of the survey." Merriam (2009, p. 220) stated "reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. … "If the study is repeated, will it yield the same results?" Merriam pointed out that "reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static" (Merriam, 2009, p. 220), and that "the more important question for qualitative research is whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 2009, p. 221).

Analysis

Because I adopted a mixed method for this study, I divided all responses into two categories: quantitative and qualitative. I collected the quantitative responses through the electronic questionnaires from two groups of survey participants: former graduates and Japanese instructors. I examined all responses from the two groups separately, for comparison. I used questionnaires with closed-ended questions for the quantitative analysis. I divided the quantitative data into two categories related to the first two research questions. I further divided all responses related to those two research questions into two groups: responses from former students and responses from instructors. Fink

(2009) argued that survey data should be analyzed based on the sample size, the research design, and the features and size of the data. Because the quantitative responses in this study were expressed on a 5-point Likert-type scale, I converted them to numerical values (Strongly disagree = 0, Disagree = 1, Neither agree nor disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly agree = 4) for analysis. Then, I analyzed all the responses in each format statistically to explore the first and second research questions, calculating the percentage of respondents for each scale point, overall mean, and standard deviation. A comparison of the responses of the two groups laid the foundation for further discussion.

Fink (2009, p. 89) discussed content analysis, open-ended responses, and comments: "Content analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data for the purpose of drawing inferences about the meaning of recorded information such as the open-ended responses and comments made by survey respondents" (Fink, 2009, p. 89). I collected the qualitative data for this study through two different methods: responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and interviews. I read all comments carefully and categorized them based on "certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences" (Fink, 2009, p. 89). Finally, I analyzed those comments on the basis of the study's research questions.

Background of the Researcher

I have been working as a Japanese-language instructor in California for 2 and a half decades. I currently work at the government-sponsored foreign-language Institute in northern California where this research took place. I am also a part-time instructor of Japanese at a community college in the South Bay Area. Before working in northern California, I had the opportunity to develop Japanese-language programs and two

exchange programs at college-preparatory schools and to teach Japanese at several universities in the Los Angeles area.

I obtained a Master of Linguistics degree from California State University, Northridge. My master's thesis on sociolinguistic study inspired me to conduct research on language and language pedagogy. Current research interests include sociolinguistics and intercultural communication.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

In this chapter, I discuss the findings obtained through two surveys and seven interviews. I conducted one survey and six interviews to see if students who studied the Japanese language for 64 weeks at the government-supported Institute developed communicative competence at a level allowing them to comfortably accomplish their work in Japan. I administered another survey and one interview to see how the institute's Japanese instructors perceived the program's effectiveness in developing the students' communicative competence. The surveys used for this study consisted of quantitative and qualitative Likert-type statements administered to 35 former students and 12 instructors who currently teach or used to teach Japanese at the Institute. Six former students and six current Japanese instructors of the Institute participated in the interviews. In the first part of this chapter, I discuss the findings of the survey and interviews administered to the graduates. In the second part, I present the findings of the survey and the interview administered to the Institute's Japanese instructors.

Research Questions

The following four research questions guide this study:

1. How effective is the Japanese language program at the Institute in helping students build communicative competence?
2. Does the Institute provide a curriculum and cultural information that helps students build communicative competence?

3. What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?

Findings from the Survey and Interviews with Students

Students Participating in the Survey

I conducted the survey from October 21, 2015 to January 13, 2016; 35 graduates of the Institute participated in the survey. All participants graduated from the Institute between 1999 and 2015 and achieved a score of at least 2 in Listening, 2 in Reading, and 1+ in Speaking, based on the ILR (2015). Participants either worked or are currently working in Japan in sectors related to national-security issues. The majority of Institute graduates are men; however, because their gender does not affect the types of work they conduct in Japan; I did not treat participants' gender specifically in this study. Table 1 shows the number of participants by graduation year, the length of their stay in Japan, and how often the survey participants communicate (or communicated) in Japanese with Japanese people while working in Japan.

Students Participating in the Interview

Among the 35 survey participants, I chose six former students for the interview. Three interview participants were currently working in Japan, one of them was taking classes with their Japanese counterparts at a staff college, and two interviewees used to work in Japan but are now working in the United States. I interviewed four participants who are currently working or studying in Japan in Tokyo in November 2015; I interviewed one participant in California in January 2016 and one participant through

Skype in December 2015. Table 2 shows the length of stay in Japan of the six interviewees.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Number of participants
Year of graduation	
1999	1
2000	2
2001	1
2002	1
2004	1
2006	1
2007	1
2008	1
2009	2
2010	4
2011	2
2012	5
2013	5
2014	6
2015	2
Total	35
Length of stay in Japan	
Over 9 years	3
6–9 years	3
3–6 years	8
1–3 years	14
Less than 1 year	7
Total	35
Frequency of Communications in Japanese	
Daily	15
Often	17
Occasionally	3
Total	35

Table 2

Interviewees' Length of Stay in Japan

Interviewee	Length of stay in Japan
1	3 years
2	7 months
3	1.5 years
4	6 months
5	4 years
6	7 years

Analysis of Former Students' Responses

I conducted the survey using an electronic questionnaire consisting of quantitative and qualitative questions. For the quantitative questions, I used Likert-type statements to evaluate the program's effectiveness in four areas: (a) linguistic competence, (b) sociocultural competence, (c) discourse competence, and (d) strategic competence. I treated each of the quantitative responses numerically and calculated mean scores and standard deviations. Each of the four sections also included qualitative open-ended questions to more accurately collect the opinions of survey participants.

Linguistic Competence

To see if the Institute has helped students develop linguistic competence, the survey listed the following six Likert statements (followed by *Strongly disagree, Disagree*, *Neither agree nor disagree*, *Agree,* and *Strongly agree*):

Q6. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well in building grammatical concepts such as sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

Q7. You didn't have serious problems at all in constructing grammatically correct Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers.

Q8. You often thought (think) that the grammatical instruction you received at the Institute was sufficient.

Q10. While you stayed (stay) in Japan, you had (have) no needs to improve your grammatical knowledge for better communication.

Q11. The amount of vocabulary you acquired at the Institute was sufficient.

Q12. You feel comfortable when speaking Japanese because of your good accent in Japanese.

Tables 3 shows, the distribution of the responses to each of the Likert-type statements on linguistic competence and the calculated mean score and standard deviation for each statement concerning linguistic competence.

Table 3

Students' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Linguistic Instruction With Mean and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q6	3	8.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	34.3	20	57.1	35	100	3.31	1.132
Q7	0	0.0	3	8.6	4	11.4	16	45.7	12	34.3	35	100	3.06	0.906
Q8	1	2.9	2	5.7	2	5.7	13	37.1	17	48.6	35	100	3.23	1.003
Q10	8	22.9	13	37.1	6	17.1	5	14.3	3	8.6	35	100	1.49	1.246
Q11	0	0.0	3	8.6	8	22.8	21	60.0	3	8.6	35	100	2.69	0.758
Q12	0	0.0	3	8.6	9	25.7	19	54.3	4	11.4	35	100	2.69	0.796

Note. Q6: The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well in building grammatical concepts such as sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing; Q7: You didn't have serious problems at all in constructing grammatically correct Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers; Q8: You often thought (think) that the grammatical instruction you received at the Institute was sufficient; Q10: While you stayed (stay) in Japan, you had (have) no needs to improve your grammatical knowledge for better communication; Q11: The amount of vocabulary you acquired at the Institute was sufficient; Q12: You feel comfortable when speaking Japanese because of your good accent in Japanese.

As Table 3 shows, the mean scores for Questions 6, 7, and 8 are higher than 3 (*Agree*). Thus, the majority of survey participants believed that, at the Institute, they received sufficient instruction for building linguistic concepts. The mean scores of Questions 11 and 12 are 2.69. These scores indicated that participants moderately agreed that the vocabulary they learned at the Institute was sufficient and that they acquired good pronunciation skills. However, compared to the mean scores of other questions, that of Question 10 is far lower (1.49). This lower mean indicates that although these former students felt they learned a great many grammatical concepts necessary for communicating with native Japanese speakers, they needed to improve their grammatical skills to have better and smoother communications in Japanese.

The comments obtained through the qualitative statements express positive feedback that supported the results shown on Table 3. According to students, the Institute provided them with an excellent linguistic foundation for basic to intermediate communication in Japanese. The expressions used by students at the basic level were easily understood by native Japanese speakers. The following are the explanations provided to support this positive feedback:

- Learning a difficult language is a lifelong pursuit, but the Institute set us up for success in what that taught us.
- Although the Institute provides a solid foundation, there is always a need to improve Japanese grammar and vocabulary. I am comfortable in general Japanese.

- I feel that I am able to understand and communicate well enough to manage in most situations with the instruction provided at the Institute. However, there is always more to learn if I want to be able to understand everything.
- Due to the topic I was expected to communicate in, I often had to build and further develop my vocabulary. I never had the expectation that the Institute would teach all I need to know. I think that is an unrealistic goal or expectation.
- I went to a school to study security issues with Japanese counterparts in Japan, and was required to learn a lot of special terminology. In addition, I had to write a lot, but I only had basic sentence structure skills. Furthermore, there are a lot of words with the same meaning, but the contexts in which we use them are different. I understand that there is not much time for the program.
- I think the Institute does an excellent job teaching the foundation of proper Japanese language. If a person wants to speak more colloquial Japanese, he or she needs to do some additional studying and engaging with everyday language situations.
- Although I received an excellent foundation at the Institute, working in the language is still difficult for me.
- There is always a need for more vocabulary and always room for improvement. The course lasts only a year and a half, and it is excellent. But to live with a different culture, we need to know lots of words and concepts that there isn’t time for in one and a half years.

- With the amount of time that we had at the Institute, we learned enough Japanese to comfortably communicate with native speakers. That doesn't mean that we have finished or completed learning, though, and we must continue to learn new things.
- We were exposed to a sufficient vocabulary; more time is necessary to really absorb it and to speak and write more naturally. I went to a school to study security issues with Japanese counterparts in Japan for one year, and we were expected to write all documents in the proper written style. That was fine, but I quickly realized the writing used more different words and grammar than speech. Of course, at the Institute, we read newspapers which are similar, but individual writing is different from newspaper journalism. I was understood, and I more or less figured out how my Japanese counterparts wanted me to write over two months or so. Fifteen months is short time to get to a high level of proficiency. All the Japanese I met were very impressed by my level of speaking, reading, and writing ability. It's a fantastic start. I think any serious student just wants to do better, do more.
- As with any language, repetition, exposure and practice are essential. The Institute provided a solid foundation from which to continue my studies, but continued exposure, additional education, and living in Japan have also been critical to my becoming fluent.
- Getting train tickets, going to the clinic, and other everyday conversations were not a problem, thanks to the Institute's preparation. But, work

conversations were exceedingly difficult, and they use different grammar patterns.

- The instruction from the Institute provided a strong base to engage local Japanese, but it was still necessary to continue to expand my vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies.
- Because I attended a higher level institution all in Japanese, I was extremely overwhelmed and understood perhaps 50% of the materials. In day-to-day activities, I excelled. There is no way to become competent and prepare for graduate level courses in just one year of language study.
- The amount of vocabulary was sufficient, given the amount of time at the Institute.

As this feedback indicates, many former students were satisfied with the basic course instruction provided at the Institute; however, they also felt they have much more linguistic skills to acquire beyond the foundations, and they must continue to expand their grammatical and lexical competence to better communicate in the target language.

The following comments by former students focused on register or genre. Register is about the level of formality, and genre concerns "communicative purpose, audience, and conventionalized style and format" (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 5). The graduates offered complimentary and critical comments concerning their acquisition of skills on register or genre. The following are the complimentary comments:

- Although the Institute focused on more formal grammar patterns, those created a better foundation and led to flexibility in regards to less formal grammar learned through direct contact.

- For work, my grammatical instruction served me very well. It was a bit difficult to learn grammatical patterns for use in more casual settings. I had to learn that on my own while in Japan. However, it was much better to be proficient for work than for casual conversation.
- I graduated with a solid basic grounding in formal "*–masu"* for Japanese, but was not good with informal Japanese which most people use. However, my ability to communicate effectively was not significantly affected.
- I felt very comfortable communicating because of my vocabulary and grammatical instruction. However, I was lacking some vocabulary and understanding of grammar for daily life (such as food vocabulary) and casual conversation. However, because of the excellent basis I had for the language from the Institute, I was able to figure out new grammar patterns and vocabulary very quickly without much effort. The foundation I received from the Institute allowed me to improve my language abilities while in Japan. Specifically, while at the Institute, I recall our instructors made us narrate our day before class each day, and I think it was extremely good preparation for gaining speaking confidence while in Japan.

These positive comments indicate that students who are eager to learn new linguistic features develop a good sense of observation and use skills; they not only acquire a good linguistic foundation, but also develop the ability to adopt new linguistic rules and use the rules to form different linguistic expressions in register or genre. One interviewee commented that if he knows vocabulary, it is perfectly all right for him to communicate in the target language, even if he has problems with grammar rules. Other

former students wrote about shortcomings in the areas of register and genre. These shortcomings concern grammatical features that mark casual speech, colloquial linguistic features, and special vocabulary needed for work.

Some former students related they were uncomfortable forming casual expressions because they practiced only formal speech styles (those ending with *masu* and *desu*). In the language textbook *Japanese: The spoken Language,* Jorden and Noda (1987) explained *masu* as follows:

> The –mas– portion of the above forms is a style marker. It signals what will be called DISTAL-STYLE for verbals. This style indicates that the speaker is showing solicitude toward, and maintaining some linguistic distance from, the addressee, i.e., s/he is being less direct and more formal as a sign of deference to the person addressed (and/or the topic of discussion), rather than talking directly, intimately, familiarly, abruptly, or carelessly. This variety of speech is most generally acceptable for foreign adults just beginning their study of the language. Distal-style contrasts with DIRECT-STYLE. (p. 32)

Jorden and Noda (1987) also discussed *desu* as a distal style. Thus, the students can safely use expressions -*desu* and -*masu* when speaking to native Japanese speakers without considering differences in social status and age, and independent of the level of intimacy and type of relationship between the speakers. The following are the critical comments offered by survey participants:

- I was often told by native Japanese speakers that my speech was very formal and that my intonation was feminine.

- I learned proper Japanese at the Institute. For more colloquial language skills, I needed to listen to TV/radio and speak with people in Japanese society.
- The main difficulty in my job is that the Japanese spoken by my Japanese counterparts at the staff college is very different from everyday Japanese. I have no problem speaking to people on the streets, but other school personnel had a very hard time understanding me at first.
- The grammar instruction was definitely "sufficient", but conversational language sometimes gets past me because it was not as much a focus at the Institute to formal translation work.
- I thought the emphasis at the Institute was on more formal sentence construction, while much of the conversation with co-workers was more casual.
- Since there was very little exposure to informal speech during the course, the common use of "dictionary form" verbs in daily life was surprising. It seemed like many people were being "rude", but I eventually found out that that is natural in modern Japanese, particularly among young people.

One former student mentioned linguistic patterns that may be grammatically wrong but are commonly used and understood by native Japanese speakers.

- I felt the Institute's program created enough of a foundation where I was able to discuss various words or ideas without knowing the specific phrase or vocabulary. However, there were some "slang" grammar patterns being utilized which were confusing at first (such as terms like *zenzen daijoobu*).

Most Japanese textbooks explain that "*zenzen*," which means "at all," is followed only by a negative predicate, meaning "not at all." However, the example used here shows that "*zenzen*" was used with an affirmative predicate, and "*zenzen daijoobu*" means "I am totally fine." This usage is becoming popular among younger people, but those who studied Japanese through textbooks intended for foreign-language classes are perplexed by it. Discussing linguistic change, Wardhaugh (2010) pointed out that "younger speakers are observed to use the language differently from older speakers" (p. 201). This sociolinguist talked about age-grading, a phenomenon by which people use speech appropriately to their age group. Thus, teenagers who say "*zenzen daijoobu*," which is grammatically odd, would not use the same expression in their 30s and 40s. Therefore, foreign-language learners need to adopt the peculiar linguistic expressions used by special groups of people when they encounter the situation in which the expression is used. Two interviewees (1 and 4) also mentioned Japanese expressions used by younger people.

- It is very hard to understand slang spoken by younger Japanese. I have to listen to it very carefully.
- When watching T.V., I didn't understand Japanese spoken by high school students.

Speaking about the honorific Japanese expressions (*keigo*) introduced in textbooks, a former student commented:

- Some words I've used were laughed at because they sounded "like an old person". I've since learned the more appropriate word or words for a certain topic/situation. Additionally, using "*keigo*" as an American, even during

business meetings, is appreciated, but not necessary for my position. Part of the joy in working together is our cultural differences. Many of my counterparts WANT me speak in English, and are not at all offended if my Japanese is incorrect. Keigo is more appropriate in person, social settings.

This student learned the honorific Japanese expressions that he must use when speaking to someone whose social status and age are higher, or when referring to someone he does not know well in a formal setting. Because this person worked as an instructor at a special college in Tokyo, it was not necessary to use such honorific expressions when speaking to students. Moreover, this graduate said that his Japanese interlocutors were understanding of his improper use of Japanese expressions, given that he is not a native speaker.

The last negative feedback provided by graduates of the Institute on building linguistic competence is that the instruction they received was in preparation for the Listening and Reading Proficiency Tests and OPI, which all students must take prior to graduation and to pass with a score of at least 2 in Listening, 2 in Reading, and 1+ in Speaking (based on the ILR Scale, 2015). Some graduates stated the preparation for the test hindered their acquisition of communicative competence:

- I only had 11 months of the 16 month program. I had to graduate earlier due to job requirements. I still received a 3/3+/1+, but it was very basic. The Institute focuses on the final proficiency tests, but I don't know if that is useful.

- The program was designed to prepare students for the final proficiency tests, which does not focus on full comprehension of basic grammar. Instead, it focuses on high level *kanji* and vocabulary.
- I think the Institute prepares students very well to take the final proficiency tests and OPI. Not so much for everyday use.
- The grammar and vocabulary that will be required for my job is much different than the material tested on the final proficiency tests. The Institute has to train to the tests, granted.

Because students who spend 1.5 years studying the Japanese language at the Institute are granted the diploma only if they clear the proficiency tests and OPI requirement with a cumulative grade-point average of C (2.0) or higher, it is important for students to pass the final tests. Moreover, the instructors teaching any languages at the Institute must prepare students for the tests. However, some former students believed that the test requirements interfered with their ability to build linguistic competence.

As discussed above, the majority of the graduates of the Institute thought they received an excellent linguistic foundation in the basic course. However, acquiring a different language it is a lifelong pursuit because one must acquire many more linguistic skills. One challenge for the Japanese program at the Institute is to discern effective ways to introduce a variety of linguistic structures that show different registers and genres. Another challenge for the Institute is to keep a good balance between building students' linguistic competence and preparing them for the final proficiency tests.

Sociocultural Competence

The following three Likert statements explored what former students of the Institute thought about their sociocultural competence.

Q14. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well in using Japanese in a culturally appropriate way (such as formality and politeness).

Q15. You didn't have any serious problems at all in using culturally appropriate Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers.

Q16. You have not experienced being in a very embarrassing situation because the Japanese expressions you used are culturally appropriate.

Tables 4 show the distribution of the responses to each Likert statement concerning sociocultural competence and the calculated mean score and standard deviation for each statement on former students' sociocultural competence.

Table 4

Students' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Sociocultural Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q14	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	8.6	18	51.4	14	40.0	35	100	3.31	0.631
Q15	8	22.8	1	2.9	3	8.6	23	65.7	0	0.0	35	100	2.17	1.272
Q16	0	0.0	2	5.7	5	14.3	20	57.1	8	22.9	35	100	2.97	0.785

Note. Q14: The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well in using Japanese in a culturally appropriate way (such as formality and politeness); Q15: You didn't have any serious problems at all in using culturally appropriate Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers; Q16: You have not experienced being in a very embarrassing situation because the Japanese expressions you used are culturally appropriate.

As the mean score of Question 14 shows (see Table 4), the majority of survey participants thought they learned to use Japanese in a culturally appropriate way at the

Institute. Yet, answers to Questions 15 and 16 informed that this does not mean those nonnative Japanese speakers did not encounter problems caused by a lack of knowledge of how to speak the language in a socioculturally appropriate way. The feedback related to Question 14 follows:

- The Institute did great—but only 1.5 years … one will still make mistakes after coming to Japan. Getting embarrassed is part of learning Japanese!
- The Institute provided sound and appropriate cultural awareness instruction. As my Japanese level and understanding improved, I was able to have a greater appreciation of the instruction provided.
- I cannot recall any specific examples, although I am sure there were times I utilized the wrong expression and did not realize it. I would not place any blame for this on the Institute, but rather the process of continuing to become comfortable with a foreign language.
- I had no experience at all with Japanese culture or language prior to coming to the Institute (I had never heard the Japanese language before). Therefore, I felt the Institute prepared me exceptionally well because I understood the basics of the culture enough to communicate and function in Japanese society. I did not know casual speech very well, but since I knew polite speech very well, I was able to start with polite speech in all situations and learn to transform my speech into casual speech if needed.

The majority of comments provided by survey participants on sociocultural issues concerned formal/politeness styles. Students offered positive and negative comments. Following is the list of the positive comments:

- Although some students may argue against the focus on formal patterns at the Institute, they are extremely useful especially during a setting where a formal tone is more appropriate. It is certainly easier to obtain those skills at the Institute, and it seemed more appreciated, even when used inappropriately.
- The *keigo* (honorific politeness) and politeness instruction at the Institute was very good, and helped me in my job very, very much.
- I feel the more formal grammatical structures we learned were sufficient basis to ensure that we used culturally appropriate language. I was able to effectively communicate for work and I did not insult or offend anyone with my language usage.
- I'm glad we studied *keigo*. A lot of co-worker conversation was at the informal level. Practicing multi-levels of formality within a short period would be helpful. For instance, within a few minutes timeframe I found myself talking with a subordinates, co-workers, and superiors.
- We were taught quite a formal register of Japanese at the Institute. I suppose it's better to be too formal and make people smirk a little, rather than be too informal and offend someone. The Institute did not give much instruction in casual Japanese. Of course. The school is aimed at professional Japanese, so I understand, but there were times when, in more casual settings, my Japanese was too formal.

Whereas some people appreciated the instruction about formal/polite expressions they received at the Institute, other former students shared their negative experiences in

using socioculturally appropriate expressions, especially when conversing in Japanese in casual situations. Following are the comments they provided:

- Sometimes a Japanese person would tell me, "Your Japanese is very beautiful" which I eventually realized was a nice way to say, "Your Japanese might be a little too formal for this conversation."
- I feel there might be over-emphasis on polite language use. It is a great starting point, but I quickly found that most friendly conversations quickly stop using polite language. It took me a while to adjust to that.
- I often receive comments from my Japanese counterparts that my Japanese is very polite. It is not necessarily a good comment as I am uncomfortable engaging them in casual discussions because I don't know how to use the shortened casual grammar. I also have some difficulty following their casual discussion as the skipping of particles, or shortcuts to verbs are unfamiliar to me. I also rarely use *keigo* – (honorific politeness) while I am in situations that may be appropriate for *keigo* – my Japanese counterparts have no expectation for foreigners to use it.
- If anything, I cannot speak or understand very casual speech.
- I have grown up in a Asian culture situation, so I was already inherently sensitive to the cultural aspects of Japan at least at a basic level. The only speech style I was taught and know is the proper style taught at the Institute. My problem is that I can't use any other speech style even when the situation calls for it.

- I learned and practiced only polite and formal speech format, which has limits while living in Japan. Not every situation uses formal speech format.
- Different speech styles (e.g., formal/informal) remain the most challenging aspect of the Japanese language for me.

Several former students observed that mastering culturally appropriate language use requires an enormous amount of time, because the language and the culture are vast areas to learn. The following are the comments these graduates provided:

- There are too many expressions to remember! We only touched on a small portion at the Institute, but I've learned more since then.
- Japanese language and culture are so wide ranging. Although the Institute is as a world-class program, it would be impossible to teach within 1.5 years enough Japanese and culture for a graduate "not to have any problems." Problems in culture, or appropriate language were not due to insufficient instruction at the Institute, but due to such a huge amount of language and culture here in Japan.
- Japanese culture is rich and old, and I didn't expect the Institute to make me a cultural anthropologist; therefore, of course there were times, still now, that I have to learn something rooted in cultural to better understand what was/is being communicated.
- There's no way to totally prepare us, because we are still foreigners, and Japanese people, even in Tokyo, will see us that way. But knowing the language and some basic customs of being polite go a long way here, or at least give people the impression of us as either individuals or as Americans.

- I think the cultural instruction was great, but you really arrive in Japan, you realize how little you actually know. Especially, I was surprised about how different command relationships and administrative practices were in the Japanese national security organization, versus the one in the US. Also, things acceptable in the US such as self-deprecating humor don't go over well in Japan.
- Japanese is always going to be a lifelong pursuit and using culturally appropriate language takes time. The Institute provided a good foundation for it, but getting to a level of full proficiency is difficult in the amount of time given.
- Using proper speech style in Japanese is a skill gained over time. I do not think any graduate from the Institute would be able to do this perfectly without living for some time in Japan. It may be useful to cover some more of the cultural aspects of Japan such as holidays, and things associated with them (i.e., why Japanese people place bamboo in front of their door around New Year's and eat expensive *bentos* (special foods prepared for celebrating a new year on New Year's Day). This is all learned while in Japan, but if there is an opportunity, it would be good to expose students to some of these things while at the Institute.
- Casual spoken/conversational Japanese is not taught to a great extent at the Institute, and students are left to learn this on their own once arriving in Japan. The adjustment from knowing only formal/proper Japanese to talking casually

with peers takes some time, as expressions vary, along with tone and context. I am not sure this is something the Institute can teach, however.

- By considering the institution's required objective, the institution provided the best possible learning methods and skills required for Japanese students. If it is possible to incorporate different speech format or pattern, such as informal or casual speech, it will be much more useful in practical Japanese. Also, learning more practical use of Japanese might be helpful since not everyone is a scholar or an expert.
- I thought that Japanese training at the Institute was rigorous, and did a good job of training me for my job in Japan. The teachers were particularly patient and always willing to help and spend extra time with me. My only suggestions would be to add a little more emphasis on informal language, have students practice different levels of formality/*keego* in rapid succession, and have some actual *enkai's* to practice "social" Japanese since parties are such a large part of Japanese culture.

Some former students I interviewed shared opinions regarding the casual and honorific speech styles. Interviewee 5 said he learned the casual speech styles by using them in Japan. Interviewee 3, who teaches at a staff college in Tokyo, mentioned that his Japanese colleagues and his students wondered why he used the formal styles –*desu* and –*masu*. Because his occupational status is higher, this person does not need to speak formally to coworkers and students. This interviewee said it took him almost 1 year to adopt the casual speech style naturally and comfortably. Interviewee 4 said he cannot use casual styles naturally and therefore does not feel comfortable using them.

Interviewee 2, who currently works at a college in Japan, also talked about his experience with the casual speech style. Because the speech style taught at the Institute is formal, and this former student was comfortable using this style, he used it even when speaking to Japanese friends. His friends told him, "Stop using that. You don't have to be so polite. Please don't be so polite." Following these comments, this interviewee started practicing the casual style, and it took him a month to get used to it. Because he tried to speak casually with his friends, now he needs time to think of formal speech styles when he is required to speak formally. This person noted that he accidentally used some casual expressions when talking to the dean of the college, even though this style was not appropriate to the occasion. This episode revealed that foreign-language learners encounter new types of problems as they add new linguistic features to their repertoire.

Although educators at the Institute teach honorific and humble polite expressions, some interviewees said that they do not use them often. Interviewee 4 said he usually speaks using *–desu* and *–masu* forms even when speaking to people whose social statuses are very high because he thinks he would make mistakes if he used the honorific style, and because linguistic expressions containing *–desu* and *–masu* are acceptable. Interviewee 3, who works as an instructor at a staff college in Tokyo, mentioned he uses *–desu* and *–masu* forms even when he talks to a person with the highest status at his school; he noted that the person with high social status is simply happy to see an American instructor speaking Japanese, and this former student does not feel he needs to use the honorific speech style.

In addition to comments on formal/informal speech styles, some survey participants talked about expressions exclusively used by Japanese men and about

regional dialects. Although the Japanese language does not greatly reflect the speaker's gender when people speak formally or politely, native Japanese speakers commonly use gender connotations when socializing with intimate people in informal situations. Casual speakers commonly adopt pronouns that indicate the speaker's gender and sentence-final particles that reveal the gender of the speaker. Shibatani (1990) described men's and women's speech as follows:

> There are both specific and general features that characterize the difference between men's and women's speech in Japanese. Among specific features are lexical items that are characteristic of the different sexes. Even in those languages where the sex difference is said to be reflected less in speech, some differences in the use of interjections are observed. Japanese also has a few interjections or exclamatory expressions that are exclusively used by women, e.g., *maa* 'Wow!', *ara* 'Oh!'. But the most conspicuous area in the lexicon that differs between men's and women's languages is the first-person pronominal forms. (p. 371)

When men use masculine expressions, they usually sound abrupt. In contrast, women adopt nouns and particles that sound feminine and soft. Discussing the dialects spoken in Japan, Shibatani (1990) stated the following:

> Japan, a mountainous country with numerous islands, has a setting ideal for fostering language diversification; indeed, Japanese is extremely rich in dialectal variations. Different dialects are often mutually unintelligible. For example, the speakers of the Kagoshima dialect of the southern island of Kyūshū would not be understood by the majority of the people on the main island of Honshū. Likewise, northern dialect speakers from such places as Aomori and Akita would not be

understood by the people in the metropolitan Tōkyo area or anywhere toward Western Japan. (p. 185)

The following are some comments made by survey participants about the dialects commonly spoken in Japan:

- I was aware that men don't speak the way we were taught, and I was unable to understand their speech or replicate it myself.
- I found/find it very difficult to understand conversations between males (my co-workers).
- Generally. No issues with speech styles, unless it is a strong regional accent, or very casual/informal speech (usually older men speaking down to us).
- I struggle with some of the regional accents I hear, especially people from Shikoku. Some older men use very informal Japanese when talking to us, which is hard to understand.
- The Institute did not address the different dialects but focused on language that could be understood by Japanese when spoken. This made listening a challenge in some areas.

The third and fourth comments above are not just about gender. The age difference between speaker and addressee is an important factor that affects the speech styles of Japanese speakers. Unlike in the United States, where people of any age can communicate freely and casually, in Japan younger people are expected to speak more politely when speaking to elders. Therefore, this former student who did not know the culture was uncomfortable when older men spoke to him, as they sounded blunt and bossy.

Four interviewees talked about their experiences with regional dialects and accents. Interestingly, three (Interviewees 1, 5, and 6) said that the Aomori dialect spoken in northern Japan is very difficult to understand. Because this dialect is so hard to understand, Interviewee 1 asked a Japanese friend to listen to the conversation in Aomori dialect and explain it to him; however, his friend had no idea about the conversation. Interviewee 4 also said the dialects spoken in different regions were hard to understand. In contrast, Interviewee 5 revealed he intentionally practiced and used the Kansai dialect, which is spoken in the western part of Japan, because many of his Japanese coworkers were from that region and were very happy to be addressed in their dialect. This interviewee said that his endeavor created better relation with his coworkers.

Interviewee 2 mentioned a sentence particle that is exclusively adopted by Japanese male speakers. This interviewee said his male friends often use the sentence particle "*zo*," which sounds very blunt and masculine, but he cannot use it and it is hard for him to get used to the masculine style.

A graduate commented that it is important for foreigners to know where one can fit into the culture. The following is the feedback provided by this graduate:

- Yes, knowing the culture is important. But more important is where you, the foreigner, fit into the culture. Because I'm not Japanese, my co-workers and especially other Japanese whom I don't know, don't expect me to act Japanese, or follow Japanese cultural practice, to include using appropriate language. Most native Japanese are simply happy that I can understand basic Japanese and that I'm aware of the cultural practices. However, I've never felt pressured to use or follow the social norm. In some cases, I've been told that I

used proper speech style when it was not necessary. I think this is something that can only be taught repeatedly. … To really master it, you must understand the culture, and where you fit in. … And because I'm not Japanese, this is difficult.

This comment reveals that even though this person accepted that Japanese people treat him with special indulgence because he is a foreigner, he occasionally gets confused in the situations he encounters.

One graduate who did not go to Japan right after he finished the Japanese course at the Institute but went to a graduate school made the following comment:

- I had solid fundamental knowledge of the language when I arrived in Japan, after graduating from the Institute, then Graduate School. The additional language education at Graduate School (1.5 years) was helpful in allowing me to absorb much of what had been taught to me at the Institute. It also gave me more exposure to Japanese culture prior to arriving in Japan, so there were very few surprises.

This former student mentioned that repetition, exposure, and practice are critical in learning language and culture.

One graduate mentioned frequent practice he had when studying Japanese at the Institute:

- I thought the Institute taught many important cultural items. Sometimes, however, I didn't realize that I was being taught culture. I thought self-introductions were merely a method for learning Japanese, rather than

> important because you actually use self-introductions frequently while in Japan.

Due to his job, this former student must meet and work with Japanese counterparts in different regions in Japan. Interviewee 1, who had similar a work experience, provided more explanation about this comment. The interviewee said that wherever he meets people, he is welcome with a big welcome party. At the party, the U.S. guest is always expected to introduce himself in Japanese, and this always happens no matter where he is and who he meets.

Overall, former students provided positive and negative comments on the Institute's instruction about different speech styles. Whereas some of those who are satisfied with the instruction they received at the Institute said they developed skills to deduce different speech styles from the styles they knew, some mentioned they had problems understanding and using casual styles such as styles that reflect the speaker's gender, colloquial styles, and regional accents. Speaking positively of the basic course offered at the Institute, some graduates noted that the acquisition of a foreign language and culture cannot be accomplished by studying the language for just 1.5 years. Finally, one survey participant wrote: "I don't think one can really understand the culture until living among it."

Discourse Competence

To check the pragmatic competence developed by former students of the Institute, I used the following two Likert-type statements:

Q18. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well to organize expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement, so that you successfully used unified spoken or written expressions.

Q19. You didn't have occasions in which miscommunication occurred because you organized proper utterance, or had no deviation in the expressions used.

Table 5 show the distribution for each Likert-type statement and the mean score and standard deviation of those two questions.

Table 5

Students' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Discourse Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q18	0	0.0	1	2.9	1	2.9	28	80.0	5	14.3	35	100	3.06	0.539
Q19	0	0.0	12	34.3	8	22.9	11	31.4	4	11.4	35	100	2.20	1.052

Note. Q18: The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well to organize expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement, so that you successfully used unified spoken or written expressions; Q19: You didn't have occasions in which miscommunication occurred because you organized proper utterance, or had no deviation in the expressions used.

As shown on Table 5, the mean score of Question 18 is 3.06, which means most students agreed with this statement. However, the mean score of Question 19 was much lower. This lower mean score reveals that a higher number of former students experienced miscommunications due to their failure to organize proper utterances or deviation from the proper expressions. I partitioned the comments on discourse competence made by graduates into four areas: (a) different features from those used by native Japanese, (b) interference from learner's native language, (c) misusage when

speaking Japanese spontaneously, and (d) learning experiences. The following are the comments on unnatural expressions made by some survey participants:

- At any rate, sometimes I knew what I said was grammatical, but it didn't match the "usual" way a native speaker would express the same thing, so it took more tries to get someone to understand it.
- Because of the importance of nuance and specialty vocabulary in Japanese, I needed to put increased emphasis on increasing my job-related vocabulary. Communication never failed, I just needed to use a different strategy or explain the matter in a more common or descriptive way.
- There have been many situations where I was unable to be understood by a native Japanese speaker. In many cases I had a third party with me (native Japanese speaker) and asked them what was wrong with my speaking… was it bad pronunciation, grammar, etc.? Often I'm told in these situations that my Japanese was fine and probably the person I was talking to was just confused.
- Any failure in communication was largely the result of my Japanese counterparts being too nice. They were reluctant to correct any mistakes, and interpret the message on their own.

Some comments indicated that the native language of learners could become a hindrance when forming expressions that have the same meaning in their first and second languages. Two survey participants shared their experiences on mistakes caused by interlinguistic interference as follows:

- Any problem or mistake I made was often due to getting carried away and intending to speak complicated Japanese at the same level as a complicated English conversation.
- My Japanese counterparts at security school speak more like newscasters … you have to frontload the descriptions before the nouns. It takes a while to understand it. My first few classes were very rough, but in the last few months I have been getting very positive feedback about my Japanese. Mostly, the change has been in my ability to think in their grammar patterns.

These comments show that second-language learners, consciously or unconsciously, cannot get rid of their first language when forming expressions in their second language. Consequently, their native tongue affects the structures and sequences the learners construct in their second language, causing deviations that do not sound natural to native speakers of their second language.

Some comments on discourse competence revealed that second-language learners occasionally fail to communicate in their second language with second-language native speakers because of wrong word choices or lack of expressions to convey their true feelings or opinions. The following comments explain why those former students of the Institute failed to communicate in Japanese:

- There were several times I had poor word choices, or said something that was misconstrued.
- My reading and comprehension skills are strong, but I still struggle with remembering the correct expression to use while speaking. I can actually write

more easily, as I have time to consider my grammar, but I struggle under the pressure of speaking.

- I accidentally told a co-worker that I loved him, rather than "I will meet you".
- When discussing "*goboo*" (burdock root) with a Japanese friend, I explained that in America, *goboo* is "garbage"—meaning that farmers cut it down and throw it away because we don't have a tradition of eating it. However, I think I insulted my friend by saying that burdock is worthless. I meant to only highlight the differences in culture, but my Japanese was not sufficient to get my point across.

As these comments indicate, second-language learners struggled to use the right expressions to convey what they wanted to say when required to speak spontaneously in their second language. When they felt under pressure, sometimes they accidentally chose words or expressions that caused miscommunication. Interviewee 6 shared his experience when adopting a wrong expression: "When I asked my wife's father if I can marry her, I was very, very nervous, and I spoke very quickly saying that it was very beautiful." At the time this speaker intended to say something about marriage, the verbal expression he suddenly spoke was highly unexpected, and quite unrelated to his intension. He said he was very embarrassed.

Some former students mentioned that the vocabulary used in communication plays an important role whether or not one can communicate in the second language successfully. The feedback collected about vocabulary issues follows:

- The biggest hurdle I have is remembering vocabulary. However, I can typically learn my way around to explain what I'm wanting to say, or digital

aids are used (and the use of aids is not frowned upon at all, because everyone uses them in social setting; not in a business setting, however).

- My limited vocabulary is the greatest problem in understanding Japanese communication. My biggest weakness in communicating to someone is my lack of understand grammar beyond a very basic use. Therefore, the ideas I am trying to communicate get simplified and lack depth or complexity.
- Failure to communicate happened mostly when I did not know the appropriate vocabulary, or was not able to respond quickly enough (I am a little bit shy). I joined a local soccer team and when discussing field positioning and tactics, I would occasionally miscommunicate, but it was generally due to not understanding the vocabulary, and not due to the sequencing of my expressions.

As these survey participants mentioned, it is crucial to know the vocabulary of the foreign language for communication. Speaking about digital aids, four people (Interviewees 1, 2, 3, and 4) who currently live in Tokyo talked about their use of smartphones; they said they often use them even in the midst of a conversation if they lack the right words to continue the conversation. As noted in the first comment, these people feel it is usually all right to depend on these aids, and they do not cause any problems in communication. The development of technology obviously contributes to communication in one's second language.

Although they do not blame the instruction offered at the Institute, nor do they have negative comments about the Japanese program, several graduates shared their experience of continuing to make mistakes even now:

- For 1 year, when I went to school, I was pretty good. But I still do make many mistakes.
- Generally speaking, I still struggle with construction of longer sentence and paragraphs.
- At the level I was instructed at the Institute, I have had no issues. However, in work and life as I move further into advance topics, there are always times when it becomes troublesome to express more advance concepts. This is part of learning Japanese.
- I felt the Institute prepared me properly, but to say I never miscommunicated would not be accurate. My training at the institute allowed me to communicate effectively most of the time.
- I was taught well enough to know what I do know, and to recognize when I don't know something. So, usually when I feel that I would not be able to communicate in a certain situation, I take time in advance to do research.
- Typically I have problems when discussing abstract concepts, such as discussions about leadership, value systems, etc.
- I think that on a daily basis, there was a miscommunication of some sort, though maybe just slight or insignificant.

These respondents said they do well in certain areas when carrying on conversation in Japanese and still make mistakes in other areas, though they are able to manage the interaction with the native speakers. As one graduate pointed out, this is part of learning any language that all second-language learners must experience to improve their communication skills in the target language.

In summary, in this section I analyzed whether graduates of the Institute have developed good discourse competence. Most survey respondents adopt different expressions from those used by native speakers. Several factors cause these deviations: psychological pressures when speaking spontaneously, interference from the speaker's native language when forming Japanese expressions, and insufficient vocabulary for managing the communication. However, these problems can also be important factors in improving their communication skills in the target language. Making mistakes and occasionally encountering embarrassing situations is an unavoidable process for any second-language learner and part of the learning experience. Accumulating the experience of making many mistakes, those learners of the Japanese language gradually make improvements in their language skills.

Strategic Competence

I used two Likert-type statements to evaluate the strategic competence developed by former students of the Institute:

Q21. You think that you have developed skills to rephrase when you forget, or when you don't know a particular word.

Q22. You didn't have occasions when you felt it was hard to continue communicating with native Japanese speakers since you don't have correct words to use.

Table 6 shows the distribution for each question, and the mean score and standard deviation for each Likert statement.

Table 6

Students' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Strategic Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q21	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	37.1	22	62.9	35	100	3.63	0.490
Q22	3	8.6	5	14.3	7	20.0	15	42.8	5	14.3	35	100	2.40	1.168

Note. Q21: You think that you have developed skills to rephrase when you forget, or when you don't know a particular word; Q22: You didn't have occasions when you felt it was hard to continue communicating with native Japanese speakers since you didn't have correct words to use.

The mean score for Question 21 (see Table 6) is 3.63, and it is the highest score when compared to the score received on questions about linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, and discourse competence. This score indicates that the majority of former students thought they developed good strategic competence while studying Japanese at the Institute. I divided comments made by former students about this competence into four areas: (a) describing/explaining the concept, (b) rephrasing, (c) using English, and (d) using an electronic dictionary.

Many survey participants said they use descriptions or explanations as strategic tools when they have trouble finding and using a particular word to continue a conversation with native Japanese speakers. The following comments explain this commonly used strategy:

- When I get stuck, I figure it out. The conversation has almost always continued.
- I worked around the word I didn't know. I either described it or I found something similar.

- I have gotten better at finding new ways to describe the word or expression I'd like to say.
- This is one part of the Institute course which is excellent. By forcing students to role play scenarios with no notes, coaching, etc., it really prepared us to learn to use the language even when we didn't know the exact words. When I was stumped, I would just explain what I was trying to say using simpler words until someone understood, then taught me the correct word.
- I used the communication strategies that we learned at the Institute: descriptions, using other points of reference etc., in order to communicate.
- I was usually able to talk around the concept until I found the word to use. I had several occasions where I discussed unique plants with my landlord and I didn't know the words, but was able to describe the plants by color or taste instead. It was clear to my landlord that I did not know the words, but we were still able to communicate and enjoy conversing, even though she was not used to speaking with non-native Japanese speakers.
- Mr. K did a fantastic job of making sure we had the confidence to explain a word/situation in many different ways.
- I worked around the word I didn't know. I either described it or I found something similar.
- Either re-word what I am trying to say or explain the meaning of the word without actually using the word.

Some respondents used other tools in case the explanations they used were not enough to continue the communication:

- Use a phrase like “what was that …”, act out the word in motions (if possible), describe the concept of the unknown word, or try the English word just in case it is not understood.
- I am always challenged to find the right Japanese word to use in conversation. I can usually talk around it or use the English word if I just can’t get close to a Japanese word.
- I usually explained the vocabulary I could not recall or I simply looked up the word in my dictionary.
- I usually try to explain by using simple words or using a different example that can convey the same meaning. … Or I use a dictionary.
- I think there will always be instances where you can’t find the right word to say. I would first to talk around that word, and if that was not successful, I would get a dictionary and try to get to the right word.
- Try to describe the word in another way, or just look it up in a dictionary.

These comments show how people positively solved the lexical problems that could stop their communications by providing extra descriptions or explanations of the unknown words. It seems that their last resort for not terminating the conversation was the use of either a dictionary or their native language.

Many survey respondents also mentioned a common strategy they used to keep the communication going with native Japanese people: rephrasing. The following are comments found in survey responses:

- I can always rephrase, but sometimes the meaning is lost in translation.
- I used a different word to go around to convey my message.

- Mr. K was effective in teaching us how to use different words to get a point across when we couldn't remember particular words.
- I was able to rephrase, or express things in a manner that native Japanese speakers understood, even if I didn't know the specific Japanese word.
- Used different words and expressions.
- The ability to rephrase is crucial to surviving, since students inevitably will not know all the vocabulary for every situation. Between rephrasing and body language, I was always able to communicate my intention.
- Have usually been able to talk around such words.

Some respondents talked about the use of an electronic dictionary as a last resort when they were at a loss in an unsuccessful communication in Japanese.

- Talk around utilizing the language skills obtained at the Institute, or utilize the electronic dictionary on my phone.
- First I'll try to rephrase my question/comment, using the vocabulary I remember. If it is a key word, then I'll use the dictionary on my smartphone to look it up.
- Rephrased. If I was totally lost, I referred to an electronic dictionary.

Referring to the use of description/explanation and rephrasing, one person said the Institute taught students to use alternative strategies and flexible approaches. Another former student mentioned he finds ways to get to the point, and this has worked very well in one-on-one conversations. One student stated that the emphasis the Institute placed on communication strategies was extremely helpful: he was able to convey the message he wanted to convey, even when he could not find the proper words.

As the high mean score of Question 21 shows, the majority of graduates of the Institute thought they acquired the strategic skills to manage communication with native Japanese speakers, even if they did not know the needed words. As the mean score of Question 22 shows, survey participants encountered difficult situations when communicating in Japanese; however, the majority of graduates responded they managed the difficulty using the strategies acquired at the Institute.

Curriculum Materials and Speaking Practice

Four statements in the survey addressed the effectiveness of the materials used at the Institute to develop communicative competence:

Q24. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing listening skills.

Q25. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing reading skills.

Q26. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing writing skills.

Q27. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had a reasonable amount of speaking practice.

Table 7 shows the distribution of Likert-type scales for each question investigating the effectiveness of the curriculum materials and the amount of speaking practice and the mean scores and standard deviations for all the questions related to this topic.

As the high mean scores for Questions 24 and 25 indicated, most former students though the materials used at the Institute for developing listening and reading skills were good. Some comments on these materials follow:

Table 7

Students' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Curriculum Materials and Speaking Practice With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q24	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.9	14	40.0	20	57.1	35	100	3.54	0.561
Q25	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	8.6	12	34.3	20	57.1	35	100	3.49	0.658
Q26	3	8.6	5	14.3	9	25.7	12	34.3	6	17.1	35	100	2.37	1.190
Q27	1	2.8	3	8.6	3	8.6	16	45.7	12	34.3	35	100	3.00	1.029

Note. Q24: While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing listening skills; Q25: While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing reading skills; Q26: While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing writing skills; Q27: While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had a reasonable amount of speaking practice.

- Superb course materials and structure.
- I think the material was appropriate.
- Materials were great.
- The textbooks used were fine for basic learning, but the news articles and the instructor-created listening materials created by my teaching team were very effective because they were equivalent to the native materials I saw in Japan.
- One of the challenges that I found while we were at the Institute was that I couldn't find listening material for self-study that was longer than a short sound-byte on a website. I have since found some good sources for longer

(approx. 20 min) listening practice, but having these sources available outside the classroom would help to reinforce what was being taught in the classroom.

- I sought out and received support for additional reading assignments (e.g. current events newspaper articles), which we then used for one-on-one discussion as well.
- I like the news articles with audio. Ms. R would get clips and transcribe them. This was very very helpful. Mr. A did something similar and also used *soomatome* (name of a book), these were effective. Mr. T was very good at helping us break down news articles. Also Mr. T periodically brought in a Japanese movie to watch. Ms. R also recommended several Japanese shows with English subtitles. I found that by the end of the first month at the Institute, watching Japanese TV or movies was highly beneficial in helping my ears to adjust and pick up nuanced vocabulary and grammar usage.
- The teachers chose materials that were interesting to us and experiences we would encounter while in Japan, which helped me not to feel scared when in a new language situation.

As the lower mean score of Question 26 indicates, some students were not satisfied with their acquisition of writing skills:

- I don't recall a lot of writing practice, but haven't needed to write long passages in Japanese since then either.
- There was almost no training in writing *kanji* (Chinese characters) at the Institute. Although I was able to write *hiragana* and *katakana* (phonetic descriptions) well, we never spent much time on *kanji*.

- I don't feel that we focused on writing at all. *Kanji* comprehension certainly, but I could not write a full sentence in Japanese until I went to a civilian university and had to for grade.
- The course for me was excellent in developing reading and speaking skills, but writing is not a priority. I believe writing is my absolute weakness skill in Japanese, and will take a lot of time to learn.
- I believe adequate and level appropriate material was always available, but I was not able to develop my writing skills into a truly usable skill because of my own limitations.
- Writing was not a targeted skill for the program, so understandably, writing was not practiced much.
- I think heavy emphasis on reading and listening was appropriate especially for the final proficiency tests which the instruction tends to train towards. But even now I struggle with *kanji* because I don't believe I received a strong foundation in understanding *kanji* usually taught in the writing of parts and pieces of *kanji*.
- I feel like the writing instruction is the weakest at the Institute. This is only something I discovered upon arriving in Japan and writing some documents such as surveys for portions of the course I attended. Once my Japanese classmate corrected my work, it did not look similar to what I wrote. I realized that I did not know how to write well/properly in Japanese. It would be beneficial to include instruction on how various types of communication are

constructed in Japanese. The writing style and vocabulary differs drastically, depending on the written product.

Japanese instruction at the Institute emphasizes three areas: listening, reading, and speaking. Because students are not required to develop adequate writings skills in the target language, they mostly practice writing by writing journals or simple essays about topics introduced in the textbook. Although students must recognize Chinese characters called *kanji* and understand their meanings, this requirement aims at developing reading skills. Therefore, as commented by some former students, especially those who study at a Staff College in Tokyo with their Japanese counterparts, they are quite confused when they must write a short but formal report in Japanese; as in English, formal writing in Japanese is quite different from spoken language in syntax and lexicon.

The mean score of Question 27 is 3.00, and this number shows most graduates are satisfied with the speaking practice they had at the Institute. Comments on developing speaking practice follow:

- Speaking practice could use expression, but it does take a lot of instructor time and student effort to accomplish it one-on-one.
- Lack of speaking was probably the one thing I didn't like about the course. While we did have some one-on-one with instructors, I think it would have been nice if we had a program to speak with other non-faculty members, in order to make the conversation more authentic to the program. I tried to get a speaking partner from one of the local universities in the area, but we never did meet. Perhaps there can be a partnership with a university in Japan to help with speaking?

- Speaking practice is my greatest weakness coming out of the Institute and the skill I require the most in my current position. I understand that many languages offered at the Institute emphasize reading and listening – but for Japanese, due to the bilateral relationships that is the basis of learning Japanese, speaking skills should be emphasized more compared to other languages. Ever since I graduated from the Institute, all my refresher and additional language training I have received, I gave requested be solely focused on speaking skills, as this is so essential and my greatest weakness in communication.
- The Institute is an intensive program. It is very helpful for developing a foundation. However, I do not feel it is sufficient if one is expected to speak fluently. Additional exposure, practice, and living in Japan are critical.
- Given the nature of the position of the national security specialist, I think the Institute would best serve the students by allowing 2–3 hours a day where the students could talk in person, or Skype with native Japanese speakers, (preferably with national security backgrounds). This will help build the skillset of introducing themselves to people they haven't ever met before and in learning a more "native" way of speaking used by my Japanese classmates at the school. The Institute prep is important, but it's also important to get the speaking skills ready for the first day on the job. I was very lost for the first few weeks and was constantly searching dictionaries for all the new words.
- I had a good amount of speaking opportunity. However, due to the nature of the Institute's objective and required instruction, the speaking was focused on

the OPI prep, which lacks a natural flow of speaking or common speaking practice.

- There is never enough time. It is also hard because you are not immersed in the country.
- There is just so much to learn in such a short amount of time. Truly, the Japanese course could be extended – or have a requirement for some beginning Japanese prior to being accepted into the course.
- The problem with the Institute and the language requirements is that the proficiency tests which the students take before graduating from the Institute do not accurately gauge a security specialist's language proficiency. I have been tasked to interpret the language and use my speaking skills, which is entirely different than what my work organization tests me on every year. Conversational language is much more valuable to my work requirements but the final proficiency tests require me to focus my limited study time elsewhere.
- Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are individually very difficult. At the Institute we had to do them all at the same time, and I found this very difficult. The materials may have been adequate, but in the pressured environment of the Institute, it was difficult to determine whether the weak point was due to my inabilities or to learning materials or instructions.

Even though the Institute offers all individual students 1 hour of speaking practice every day, this is insufficient for students, especially those whose work assignment after graduating from the Institute requires them to take college-level classes with their Japanese counterparts. Because the instruction offered at the Institute does not focus on

the specific areas of their work assignments, those who take classes with Japanese students or who must address higher proficiency Japanese speakers feel the communication skills they acquired at the Institute are insufficient.

In summary, the curriculum materials used at the Institute to develop communicative competence and the amount of speaking practice scheduled every day were effective. However, many students thought they did not have enough time to practice writing, due to the Institute's curriculum. Also, students thought their listening practice was adequate.

Teaching Methodology

Four statements addressed evaluating the teaching methodology used at the Institute:

Q29. The teaching methodology used for building grammatical competence was good.

Q30. The teaching methodology used for improving skills to use language in a socioculturally appropriate way was good.

Q31. The teaching methodology used for improving skills to make utterances sequentially or with proper arrangement was good.

Q32. The teaching methodology used for improving skills to rephrase unknown words was good.

Table 8 shows the distributions of Likert scores for each question and shows that all statements asking about teaching methodology used for building the four components of communicative competence received high scores from former students.

Table 8

Students' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Teaching Methodology Used With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q29	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	8.6	16	45.7	16	45.7	35	100	3.37	0.646
Q30	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	8.6	17	48.6	15	42.8	35	100	3.34	0.639
Q31	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	5.7	22	62.9	11	31.4	35	100	3.26	0.561
Q32	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.8	17	48.6	17	48.6	35	100	3.46	0.561

Note. Q29: The teaching methodology used for building grammatical competence was good; Q30: The teaching methodology used for improving skills to use language in a socio-culturally appropriate way was good; Q31: The teaching methodology used for improving skills to make utterances sequentially or with proper arrangement was good; Q32: The teaching methodology used for improving skills to rephrase unknown words was good.

Some students provided very positive comments:

- It is amazing to see the progress of students in such a short time.
- I appreciated how the course began with building a strong grammatical foundation, then moved into more advanced comprehension activities. That, combined with one-on-one speaking time created a well-rounded learning experience for me.
- There was an excellent focus using language, with very practical subjects taught. I feel that a graduate should be able to speak about basic to intermediate topics with confidence and basic grammatical correctness.
- I thought the teaching methodology was sequential and allowed for students to continue to build upon the language skills they developed throughout the program.

- I think the Japanese instruction at the Institute is incredible, and the instructors are caring and talented.

Former students pointed to two specific teaching methods: repetition and rephrasing.

- As frustrating as it is, the most useful thing for me was repetition. Going over the same article again and again helps cement that vocabulary and sentence structure in my memory. This was useful at the Institute.
- I use repetition a lot in my self-study, even after completing the Institute. I understand the need for the incredible volume of material covered in the course, but I wonder if it would be more useful to cover fewer articles in great depth. For instance, I think when I was at the Institute we had 2 to 4 articles to translate and prepare for homework every day, and after we covered them in class, we moved on to the next articles. Now, I spend 4 or 5 days on 1 or 2 articles. Once I translate them the first time and make notes on their vocabulary, I read them aloud 2 or 3 times per day for the next couple of days. That spaced repetition is far more useful in committing the vocabulary and usage patterns to memory than just trying to cover as much as possible, as quickly as possible.
- Overall it was pretty good preparation. Different styles work for different people. For me, the repetition (listening to audio files repeatedly, security terminology) gave me that vocabulary that I still remember almost six years later.

- I especially enjoyed Mr. K's role in helping us find ways to leverage other words and grammar we learned to rephrase things we wanted to say.
- Several of the instructors at the Institute challenged us to rephrase unknown words or use more challenging grammatical concepts throughout the course, which was very helpful for my growth in the language. Because I had been challenged so much by the teachers during my time at the Institute, I was able to have the confidence that I could get through any situation and communicate effectively.
- One thing taught at the Institute was to always try to say something a different way, if the proper words did not come to mind. This has worked well for me over the years; enough to where I can always get the point across.

Interviewees 6 also mentioned that he was taught how to develop skills to rephrase and that a great deal of repetition was very useful. Two interviewees (2 and 4) pointed out that drills such as structure drills and tasks and activities were helpful, and that drills were mandatory because one cannot learn languages without repeating over and over again. Interviewee 4 said that role-play was particularly useful as well, enabling him to solve the problem he had at a train station on the way to work by recalling the role-play practice he had at the Institute. Three of the interviewees (1, 2, and 5) said that daily 1-hour one-on-one speaking practice was the most effective, because they could practice speaking based on their interests and receive individualized error correction. At the Institute, educators emphasize the skills of describing, explaining procedures, and giving directions because they are included in the OPI test and are competences the students must achieve by the time they graduate from the Institute. However, three

interviewees (2, 3, and 4) noted that they do not have many opportunities to use those skills they practiced at the Institute; they occasionally use descriptions of places, but it is very rare for them to provide directions and explain procedures to native Japanese speakers. Those interviewees said people can easily check any places they want to go using a smartphone; therefore they do not need to give or receive directions. Other comments provided in this section follow:

- Because the syllabus is designed for the Institute's success, I think that the level of vocabulary greatly exceeds the level of actual competence.
- My experience at the Institute was extremely helpful, and the intensive nature of the course was helpful in forcing exposure and immersion. However, it was the additional training I received after graduation that allowed me to really become fluent and absorb much of the language taught at the Institute. Of course, that initial exposure at the Institute is critical.
- Perhaps an immersion opportunity would help halfway through the course – either overseas or in-country.

As mentioned above, the high mean scores of the questions about the teaching methodology used to build grammatical competence indicate that former students were satisfied with the instruction they received at the Institute in using language in a culturally appropriate way, making utterances sequentially or with proper arrangement, and rephrasing unknown words. However, these graduates struggle with everyday difficult situations and learn and develop new skills through these difficulties.

At the end of the survey, I provided a section where survey participants could provide comments about their experiences and recommendations or suggestions for the

Japanese program at the Institute. Because the voices of the graduates are very important to further improve the quality of the program, I list that feedback here. They include very positive comments, recommendations, and suggestions to the instructors and curriculum developers of the Institute.

Following is the very positive feedback provided by some former students:

- I was 100 % satisfied with my experience at the Institute. The coursework and teachers prepared me to get by here in Japan at a foundational level, and did it superbly. Where I answered questions about "having problems"—those questions are worded oddly. Regardless of how perfect the Institute's program is—it is only 1.5 years in length. Any graduate who comes to Japan with a goal of improving their Japanese beyond the foundational level taught at the Institute will experience problems in grammar, vocabulary, culture, speaking, etc. That is EXACTLY how one improves their Japanese. Please do not interpret my answers on the "not having any problems" questions as a critique of the school training. Quite the opposite – The Institute prepared me well with exactly the foundational Japanese I need in order to be confident enough to jump into Japanese situations in which I will have problems, so that I can continue to develop my Japanese abilities.
- The language training at the Institute was phenomenal. The instructors went out of their way to find new and innovative methods of making language learning interesting, and yet keep it applicable. The Japanese people I deal with on an everyday basis are surprised and impressed that I learned this level of Japanese in only a year and a half at the Institute. Since the Institute, my

personal failure to continue practicing and learning Japanese led to a decline in language ability, but I have no doubt that with the foundation the instructors built, I could recover lost ground with just a few weeks of concentrated study.

- The teaching team which taught me at the institute worked hard to challenge my class throughout the course, provide native materials, put us in "real-life" situations, and encourage us to speak throughout the day, which I think really helped me to have a good foundation and not be scared to be in any situation while in Japan. I was able to build on my foundation once in Japan and improve my language capabilities while there. The daily challenges to talk about regular life topics while in the class really helped me to improve my daily life vocabulary. The transcription exercises helped me to understand pronunciation and be able to figure out new words much more effectively. While I didn't write very much while in Japan, the teachers challenged us to learn to write kanji which helped me to be able to recognize new kanji and look up new words if needed. Overall, I felt my teaching team while at the Institute tailored the program to our group of students, which helped us to learn. I was very happy with my experience at the Institute, and I feel it prepared me for living in Japan and building stronger Japanese language ability.
- I thought the experience I had at the Institute was both the most challenging and rewarding academic experience of my life. The level commitment and professionalism of the instructor staff was world-class and I cannot say I would change anything.

- Great program for establishing a solid foundation from which to further build.

Below are some criticisms of the program; the areas the survey participants talked about are speaking practice, writing exercises, and emphasis the program put on the final proficiency tests, as discussed several times in the previous sections:

- More speaking practice would be very helpful.
- I greatly enjoyed the instruction I received at the Institute and I even use some of the teaching practices in my own instruction because of how well they worked for me. Looking back, the only thing I would add would be more chances at free-writing. We did get four opportunities to create presentations, as well as a few writing opportunities in the textbook, but I feel that attempting a creative writing actively would have been incredibly challenging. This would have forced me to use everything I had learned, as well as learn even more.
- Need to focus on the interaction if possible. The Institute is still a program for the members of the different security group for listening and reading. For us, we need to focus on the speaking and writing, which is the next level.
- Overall, the Institute was a great experience, and the quality of education was great. I would recommend more focus on writing, and more on culture, including speech in social settings.
- Learning Japanese at the Institute was incredibly challenging, and very time consuming. To be able to pass the final proficiency tests with a 2/2 in just 15 months is attributed to the great instructor staff efforts. However, no one should think that they will come out of the program being able to engage at

the professional level. Middle-school level at best is what I would assess the Institute can make you accomplish in 16 months. I left the Institute directly with 2/2/1+ to attend a staff college held in Japanese, which was at the college graduate-level of topics and discussion. I would be generous to say I understood 20 percent of the materials/discussions. I don't think the institute can change the curriculum significantly within the 15 months if they still want you to pass the reading and listening at 2/2 level. But the program lacks required speaking skill focus and depth in grammar.

- I think the program provided a good foundation. It provides the skills required for the final proficiency tests. Actual use of the language in country is then dependent on the individual student to pursue further development. I continue to struggle with speaking and grammar. However, most of the time I realize that what I'm trying to say, I was taught at the Institute -- I just struggle with recall.
- The quality of the instruction was excellent for obtaining a high score on the final proficiency tests. However, the tests do not focus on grammatical nuances of the language (such as the JLPT: The Japanese Language Proficiency Test). Upon arriving in Japan it was evident I lacked some basic grammar functions for day to day conversations.
- The main point is that, just like English, the staff college uses a different vocabulary and speaking style than "everyday" Japanese. The Institute must prep for the final proficiency tests, but it puts those who show up to work with

the Japanese on Day 1 at a slight disadvantage. The Institute prepared me well to live in Tokyo, but did not prepare me well to work in Tokyo.

Former students also provided recommendations or suggestions for improving the quality of the Japanese program at the Institute. They concerned the provision of scenario-based learning, work-related situations, more advanced grammar, guest speakers, immersion programs, and continuation (refresher) training.

- The scenario-based learning—both SFJ (the textbook used) and instructor-designed—was invaluable during my five years of living and working in Japan. I managed to lose everything: a child at the Ice Festival, medicine on an airplane, packages on a train, and various articles of clothing at restaurants. I also managed to recover ALL of my lost items, a testament to the honesty of the Japanese people and the usefulness of the scenario-based learning.
- Overall, the Institute was a great experience, and the quality of the education was great. I would recommend more focus on writing, and more on culture, including speech in social settings.
- The Institute was an excellent program. I do not think I could have gotten as proficient as I did in such a short amount of time in any other program. As a staff college member however, most of our work-related interactions are with our Japanese counterparts. I believe the program could have spent extra time preparing students for security related situations. Also, the program did well at providing a solid basic foundation, but seemed to jump straight to advanced topics. While this may produce higher final proficiency tests' scores, I believe

the lack of solid intermediate-level skills became a slight hindrance to truly proficient Japanese language use within the country.

- Overall, instruction is excellent, and really provides an outstanding opportunity for its students. If there is one area that I would ask for more instruction, it would be basic interpersonal relationship words and phrases used to describe people's personalities, etc. While most graduates will be using the language in a professional setting, understanding interpersonal dynamics among their counterparts is important, and we didn't receive too much instruction on those topics. Other than that, the teaching methodology employed is great. In only a year and a half you can't learn everything, so for the time available, the Institute is probably about the best course there is! Thank you so much for all of your instruction, it has been life-changing!
- I think it would be good to add the Dictionaries of Intermediate and Advanced Grammar to the issued books that students receive. I use them frequently to understand Japanese and continue learning. It might also be good to incorporate some guest speakers into the program, so that students learn rhetorical style. I often sit in lectures here, and learning to follow along with the logical progression has been difficult, and only compounded by the language barrier. That would also serve as a way for students to break up the daily routine of classes for something a little different; a break in the monotony.

- An immersion program before graduating would at least allow people to get a taste and put into practice some of what they've learned in the course. This would be particularly good at the end of the second semester.
- I believe that immersion is crucial for cementing acquired language skills. While budgetary constraints may remain, it would be most beneficial to have students spend some portion of the program in Japan, learning Japanese. The rate of learning in-country would almost certainly surpass that of just learning Japanese in Northern California.
- I'm unaware if they provide a Japanese refresher course. If so, that information is not readily available to those of us in the field.
- 18 months is a very short time to take students from zero knowledge/familiarity with Japanese, all the way to basic fluency. For individuals who are quick to learn or who already have some Japanese skills, it would be great if there were an Intermediate or Accelerated language course.
- If at all possible, expand the duration to include a period of in-country training. The fast pace and volume that needs to be covered is difficult for first-time learners to digest and incorporate into practice. Provide continuation training after assessments that concentrate on areas that need improvement or enable the students to take their Japanese to the next level.
- I think that while students are in the course they are required to work hard and make great progress. When they leave the Institute without an assignment in Japan, they tend to forget much of the knowledge, because the material hasn't fully set yet. To help this, I think a program of continued-distance learning

and temporary guidance after the student leaves would increase long-term retention of the language. The goal of this program should be to set up a lifestyle of continued focus on Japanese learning.

One respondent mentioned students' lack of effort and another commented on syllabus adjustment:

- I found the instruction and teaching staff to be exceptional during my 64 weeks as a student in the Japanese Department at the Institute. Usually, any shortcoming seemed to stem from the students' lack of effort or unwillingness to accept constructive feedback and make necessary adjustments.
- Overall, I was impressed with what the teachers are able to do (especially with me) at the Institute. That said, the typical Japanese student at the Institute is trying to become a foreign-affair specialist, not a crypto-linguist. Therefore, the syllabus should be adjusted accordingly. This would require large systemic changes in the way the national security organization evaluates people with language skills.

In conclusion, the survey and interviews conducted for this study revealed many findings. The majority of graduates of the Institute think the Japanese basic course at the Institute provided them with an excellent linguistic foundation. Although the mean scores for questions about the acquisition of sociocultural competence are quite high, former students shared positive and negative comments concerning the use of different speech styles. Supporting the instruction offered in the basic course at the Institute, some graduates observed that the acquisition of a foreign language and culture cannot be accomplished by studying the language just for 1.5 years; another said that one cannot

really understand a culture until living in it. The majority of graduates responded they managed the difficulties they encountered in communication using the strategies acquired at the Institute; they highly valued the teaching methodology used to develop the skills to rephrase or explain vocabulary. Although most survey participants were satisfied with the instruction they received at the Institute, they acknowledged that language learning is a lifelong pursuit. With the basic skills they acquired at the Institute, graduates needed to continue to make improvements by using the target language, struggling with comprehension and use, and sometimes failing to come up with the appropriate speech when communicating in the target language.

Analysis of Instructors' Responses

I conducted the survey to collect answers to the fourth research question—What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?—between October 23, 2015 and November 10, 2015. All questions asked in the survey relate to the four components of communicative competence (linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence), the teaching materials, and the teaching methodology used to develop students' communicative competence. I provide the distribution of instructors' answers to the questions as well as the mean score and standard deviation for each question.

Instructors Participating in the Survey

Participants in the survey were 12 instructors (10 native Japanese and 2 nonnative Japanese). Among the participants, 10 instructors currently teach Japanese at the Institute, and two participants used to teach Japanese at the Institute but currently work with

different assignments in different divisions at the Institute. Table 9 shows the number of years those participants have taught Japanese at the Institute.

Table 9

Instructors Participating in the Survey

Length of time teaching Japanese at the Institute	Number of participants
18 years	1
14 years	1
12 years	1
11 years	2
8 years	1
6 years	2
5 years	2
4 years	1
3 years	1
Total	12

Instructors Participating in the Interviews

I chose six instructors who are currently teaching Japanese at the Institute on the basis of their experiences teaching at the Institute and their availability for the interview. Table 10 shows the background of the instructors participated in the interview.

Table 10

Instructors who Participated in Interviews

Interviewee	Length to teach at the Institute
1	12 years
2	11 years
3	11 years
4	8 years
5	6 years
6	5 years

Linguistic Competence

To examine the perceptions of instructors on the program's effectiveness in building linguistic competence, I used the following six Likert-type statements (followed by *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree,* and *Strongly agree*):

Q2. You think that the Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well in building grammatical concepts such as sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

Q3. You believe that the former students had no serious problems at all in constructing grammatically correct Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers.

Q4. You believe that the Japanese program at the Institute provides sufficient instruction to build students' grammatical knowledge.

Q6. You believe that the former students have sufficient grammatical knowledge, so that they don't need to improve their grammatical knowledge much while they work in Japan.

Q7. The amount of vocabulary you taught at the Institute is sufficient for the students.

Q8. You believe that the students acquired good pronunciation at the Institute.

Table 11 shows the distributions of the responses to each of the Likert-type statements on linguistic competence. The mean scores shown in Table 11 indicate the instructors' moderate agreement that the program at the Institute was effective in developing students' linguistic competence. In contrast, the majority of instructors

expressed a negative opinion in answering Question 6, as the lower mean score shows (1.25).

Table 11

Instructors' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Linguistic Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q2	0	0.0	1	8.3	2	16.7	7	58.3	2	16.7	12	100	2.83	0.835
Q3	0	0.0	3	25.0	4	33.3	3	25.0	2	16.7	12	100	2.33	1.073
Q4	0	0.0	2	16.7	2	16.7	3	25.0	5	41.6	12	100	2.92	1.165
Q6	1	8.3	8	66.7	2	16.7	1	8.3	0	0.0	12	100	1.25	0.754
Q7	0	0.0	3	25.0	2	16.7	7	58.3	0	0.0	12	100	2.33	0.888
Q8	0	0.0	3	25.0	3	25.0	4	33.3	2	16.7	12	100	2.42	1.084

Note. Q2: You think that the Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well in building grammatical concepts such as sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing; Q3: You believe that the former students had no serious problems at all in constructing grammatically correct Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers; Q4: You believe that the Japanese program at the Institute provides sufficient instruction to build students' grammatical knowledge; Q6: You believe that the former students have sufficient grammatical knowledge, so that they don't need to improve it while they work in Japan; Q7: The amount of vocabulary you taught at the Institute is sufficient for the students; Q8: You believe that students acquired good pronunciation at the Institute.

In building students' linguistic competence, instructors provided feedback on eight areas: (a) necessity of advanced grammar, (b) basic level of the Japanese course, (c) influence of work assignments, (d) dependence on individual students, (e) necessity of continuing training, (f) insufficient time, (g) acquisition of good pronunciation, and (h) writing.

Some instructors provided the following comments on the necessity for advanced grammar:

- The institute should teach more intermediate and advanced grammar, along with authentic materials.

- Basic grammar is fine, but there is not enough time for advanced grammar.
- If the former students need advanced Japanese, it is necessary for them to study more.

One instructor mentioned that the course offered at the Institute is a basic course:

- I think that teachers provide enough grammatical concepts at the Institute for the Basic Course. Some grammar that the textbooks we use don't cover, or higher level grammar that is seen in [the Japanese-language proficiency test] 1 may not be taught here. However, knowing grammar through this course should be a solid foundation for former students to communicate with the Japanese people at work. I believe that the students have enough grammatical knowledge and skills to learn and deal with new knowledge of grammar/words/expressions in Japan.

The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test website presents the following information:

> The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) under joint organization of the Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchange and Services (previously Association of International Education, Japan) started in 1984 as a test to measure and certify the Japanese-language proficiency of those whose native language is not Japanese. In the first year the JLPT was conducted in 15 countries, and approximately 7,000 examinees took the test. Since then, the JLPT has become the largest Japanese-language test in the world, with approximately 610,000 examinees in 62 countries and areas worldwide in 2011. (Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, 2012).

Two instructors noted that the quality of building linguistic competence depends on students' work assignments:

- It depends on the needs of the work each student engages in.
- The amount of vocabulary taught is adequate for most students, but those going on to study in Japan (especially those going to one of the staff colleges) will need more.

Some instructors think quality depends on whether students can successfully build linguistic competence:

- The results depend on the student. The instruction was adequate, but not all students acquired the adequate proficiency to construct grammatically correct expressions.
- Some older students needed more time to practice.
- Regarding the numbers of vocabulary and functional grammar, I think that we teach them sufficient numbers and amounts. However, the degree of acquisition of pronunciation and writing proficiency greatly depends on individual students.

One comment concerned the necessity to continue training:

- If they need advanced Japanese, it is necessary for them to study more. And it is essential for them to have more opportunities to update/improve/brush up their Japanese.

One instructor expressed concern about the insufficient time he had to help students build linguistic competence:

- Given the time constraint, I did the best I could to introduce grammar points that we were covering, but I always felt that I had to rush to move on before students gained sufficient time to practice and be able to use it correctly verbally and in writing. The same goes for vocabulary. I didn't focus so much on pronunciation though I wish I had time to work on it.

The instructors provided positive and negative comments about students' pronunciation skills:

- Since most of our teachers are native speakers, the students tend to have good/natural pronunciation.
- Not enough time for teaching sound and pronunciation.

As the second comment shows, some instructors struggled to teach parts of the curriculum because of the need to accomplish the curriculum goals in a limited time. One instructor commented about the level of writing skill students develop at the Institute:

- Since writing is not required at the Institute, I think the students' writing skill is not good enough.

I also used interviews to collect instructors' opinions on the linguistic competence developed by their students at the Institute. Below is a summary of the opinions shared by the interviewees:

- Although the level at which our students master linguistic competence varies among the students, they should not have very serious problems to carry on daily conversation in Japanese, if their mastery level is good.
- Our students could communicate quite well, utilizing the grammar taught at the Institute.

- Students who acquired the skills of applying the linguistic expressions they studied at the Institute to a variety of situations, would be able to manage conversations in Japanese in Japan, but those who just memorize particular expressions would not be able to sustain communication in Japanese.

All interview participants agreed that students who studied the linguistic features introduced at the Institute would not have serious problems with grammar or vocabulary when carrying on daily conversation in Japanese. The majority of instructors believed graduates would be able to manage conversation in Japanese if they used the language daily, and only if they learned the language well and had good application skills. Those participants thought the effectiveness in using grammar, phrases, vocabulary and pronunciation vary, depending on the student.

In summary, instructors felt caught in a dilemma, feeling they have many important linguistic features left to introduce before moving on to the next. However, because of the curriculum goals that instructors and students must achieve in limited time, the Institute's instructors must make compromises about what they teach in class.

Sociocultural Competence

To see how Japanese instructors who work at the Institute perceive their students' acquisition of sociocultural competence, I used the following three Likert-type statements:

Q10. The Japanese program at the Institute prepares the students well in using the Japanese language in a culturally appropriate way (such as formality and politeness).

Q11. The former students don't have any serious problems at all to use culturally appropriate Japanese expressions, when talking to native Japanese speakers.

Q12. The former students don't experience being in a very embarrassing situation because the Japanese expressions they use are culturally appropriate.

Table 12 shows the distributions of the answers to each question and indicates the mean score and standard deviation for each question.

Table 12

Instructors' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Sociocultural Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q10	0	0.0	1	8.3	1	8.3	8	66.7	2	16.7	12	100	2.92	0.793
Q11	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	50.0	4	33.3	2	16.7	12	100	2.67	0.778
Q12	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	50.0	6	50.0	0	0.0	12	100	2.50	0.522

Note. Q10: The Japanese program at the Institute prepares the students well in using the Japanese language in a culturally appropriate way (such as formality and politeness); Q11: The former students don't have any serious problems at all to use culturally appropriate Japanese expressions, when talking to native Japanese speakers; Q12: The former students don't experience being in a very embarrassing situation because the Japanese expressions they use are culturally appropriate.

As Table 12 shows, the majority of instructors who participated in the survey either agreed or strongly agreed with Question 10, and the mean score for this question was 2.92. Although half of the instructors either agreed or strongly agreed with Question 11, the other half neither agreed nor disagreed; the mean score for this question was 2.67. Similarly, whereas half of the instructors agreed with Question 12, the other half neither agreed nor disagreed; as a result, the mean score for this question was 2.50. These mean scores revealed that the majority of instructors believed they prepared graduates well in

using the Japanese language in a culturally appropriate way. However, when the questions concern the possible problems or embarrassing situations encountered by their former students because of their socioculturally inappropriate use of language, half the instructors avoided providing clear answers and chose to neither agree nor disagree.

I divided instructors' responses to the qualitative questions about sociocultural competence into six areas of concerns: (a) speech styles, (b) impossibility to teach all aspects of the culture, (c) reliance on the individual student, (d) limited time to use the learned expressions, (e) in-country acquisition, and (f) difficulty to keep up with new cultural trends.

The majority of survey participants expressed concerns about speech styles. Following are the comments provided by instructors on building sociocultural competence:

- The Institute focuses more on polite and formal, so students tend to struggle with communicating with coworkers or friends in casual settings.
- We teach in the way that is the safest in terms of speech styles. The students are taught to speak politely, so I don't think they will encounter situations in which they are perceived as rude.
- As long as students speak, utilizing the "masu/desu" form without a "me first" attitude, they are accepted/liked by the Japanese people, I imagine.
- We teach both formal and casual registers, though students sometimes say that it is not so easy to use the casual styles.
- The Institute focuses on formal language.

- The casual language that the students will hear once they get to Japan is covered very little during the program. They may have a hard time understanding native speakers in social settings outside of their work, or talking to children. Because the language they learn is polite, they probably don't offend anyone, but that doesn't mean that they will sound appropriate or natural. Hopefully, they will learn casual speech styles once they get there, so that they can understand what's going on, but I have reservations about the idea of teaching that in the program. The focus of the program is teaching language that is appropriate in the workplace, so the scope of speech styles that they learn is extremely limited, but with the time given, I think that's a safe way to go.
- As long as they use the polite "masu/desu" form at the beginning, they will be well accepted by Japanese people; then, students can learn deeper cultural usage in Japan.
- When students know honorific and polite expressions, they can work and do well in Japan. However, they may not be exposed enough to casual expressions even though we teach the casual style at the Institute.

For the second area of developing sociocultural competence, the impossibility of teaching all aspects of the culture, one instructor commented,

- The advantage of using old textbooks is that they include Japanese culture, such as a traditional house and manners, etc. Yet, they will still encounter unknown cultural aspects of Japan once they get there. It is impossible for

them to learn everything in such a short time through limited communication with a limited number of teachers.

The third area Japanese instructors pointed to was that the quality of sociocultural competence acquired by the students depends on the individual student. One comment was provided as follows:

- It depends on each student's personality, too, when it comes to "culturally appropriate." I think most of the former students are aware of that, but some maybe not."

Two comments indicated that students need in-country learning to acquire the true meaning of the sociocultural competence:

- We teach all these things, but do the students learn them? Some do, but until they live in Japan, they will not achieve proficiency in using culturally appropriate expressions.
- It is inevitable for our students to have cultural problems, and they can negotiate the problems only when they are in the country. However, the students are made aware of this (and other) issues at an adequate level.

The last area of concern highlighted by the Institute's Japanese instructors was the need to update Japanese expressions to conform to new cultural trends in language use. One instructor commented:

- It seems that it is challenging for non-native teachers who teach Japanese at this Institute to keep up with the cultural trend and Japanese language.

The feedback provided here shows that these instructors are under pressure to teach broad and important sociocultural issues such as different speech styles, cultural

habits, and other features of Japanese society in only 1.5 years. Because it is mandatory for instructors to teach other skills that are necessary for students to communicate in Japanese, many of them were aware that what they teach at the Institute is at a rather superficial level. Comments revealed that some instructors feel frustrated when teaching because they have to move to the next topic when they feel they should spend more time offering further practice, verifying students' readiness to use the expressions just introduced, and providing extra information on the subject matter just taught.

During the interviews, the participants actively discussed issues related to speech styles. Following are a few of their opinions:

- It is hard for the graduates to use different speech styles based on the situations in which they communicate in Japanese. Since the style commonly taught at the Institute is "desu/masu," they are comfortable using that linguistic style; however, they experience awkward situations when speaking to subordinates and friends in the more formal "desu/masu" style since casual/informal speech styles are commonly adopted by those people.
- Regarding the honorific and humble speech styles, the interview participants believe that their former students can understand them when they hear or read them because they acquired the concept of different registers. However, it would be harder for the graduates to utilize the styles properly with the limited practice they had at the Institute.
- Concerning the Japanese speech styles that reflect the speaker's gender and are used in an informal situation, the instructors said that their former students would be able to understand the meanings of expressions containing gender

> connotations when they hear them, because listening exercises about this topic are part of the tasks and activities in the textbooks. Nevertheless, when it comes to using gender-related styles in conversation, all of the instructors think that it would be very challenging for most of the students to use those expressions because of the little practice they had at the Institute. Moreover, one instructor said that it is hard to teach how to use casual expressions reflecting the speaker's gender at the Institute, since the one-on-one speaking practices offered at the Institute usually involve one instructor and one student, and it is not proper for the students to speak casually to their teachers.

One instructor pointed out the stylistic problems that former students might have when writing letters and e-mails to people whose social status is higher than theirs. On these occasions, writers are expected to use very formal styles. However, students are not exposed to the task of writing formal letters at the Institute because the curriculum does not emphasize the development of writing skills.

One teacher commented on regional dialects and different styles of speech adopted by different age groups, noting that when a group of Japanese people who are from different regions of Japan work together, they usually speak in standard Japanese. Shibatani (1990) described standard language as "an ideal form of Japanese based on the Tōkyō dialect" (p. 187). As long as speakers use formal language, it is easier for the Institute's graduates to understand and communicate with other people; however, when nonnative Japanese speakers encounter various regional dialects consisting of unfamiliar accents and vocabulary, or peculiar expressions used exclusively by a particular age group, they may have no idea about what the speakers are talking. The local people or

people of different age groups are flexible enough to switch to standard Japanese, as long as the nonnative Japanese speakers initiate the conversation formally.

In summary, when asked about the sociocultural competence developed by the Institute's graduates, interview participants mainly talked about speech styles. All instructors acknowledged that their former students would experience problems with casual speech styles, honorific and humble speech styles, speech styles that reveal the speaker's gender, regional dialects, and peculiar Japanese expressions commonly used by people of a particular age group. Even though those teachers can easily acknowledge these problems, they believe it is impossible for them to cover these areas, due to limited instruction time.

Discourse Competence

I used two Likert-type statements in the survey to investigate teachers' perceptions of the program's effectiveness in developing students' discourse competence:

Q14. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well to organize expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement, so that they successfully use unified spoken or written expressions.

Q15. You believe that the former students have never failed to organize proper utterance, or had deviation in the expressions they used.

Tables 13 shows the distributions of the instructors' responses and the mean and standard deviations for the two statements used to check what teachers think of their former students' discourse competence.

Table 13

Instructors' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Discourse Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q14	0	0.0	1	8.3	6	50.0	4	33.4	1	8.3	12	100	2.42	0.793
Q15	1	8.3	9	75.0	2	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	100	1.08	0.515

Note. Q14: The Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well to organize expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement, so that they successfully use unified spoken or written expressions; Q15: You believe that the former students have never failed to organize proper utterance, or had deviation in the expressions they used.

Regarding the first statement, one teacher strongly agreed and four teachers agreed. Six instructors neither agreed nor disagreed, and the mean score for the first statement was 2.42. Regarding the second statement, the majority of instructors disagreed or strongly disagreed. As a result, the mean score for the second statement was 1.08, which is extremely low.

In the qualitative part of this section, instructors provided opinions concerning two areas: (a) limited use, and (b) differences among students. One statement about limited use follows:

- The institute introduces many expressions, yet the students do not have many opportunities to utilize them while they learn at the institute. So they probably forget many of them by the time they finally live in Japan.

Two comments suggested that the acquisition of discourse competence depends on the students:

- I think the outcome varies greatly among different students.

- We teach this, but not all students are able to create well-structured utterances by the end of the course.

These three comments indicated that instructors cannot be positive about the discourse competence built by their students at the Institute.

During the interview, I collected few opinions from participants. In summary, the six interviewees noted that in the ability to organize Japanese expressions sequentially for communication, students would probably be able to systematize what they want to say if they are speaking about themselves. Also, it would be easier for graduates to speak systematically when they are addressing just one person rather than a large audience.

In summary, these comments suggested that students who spend a great deal of time practicing speaking can easily carry on smooth conversations in Japanese using expressions with appropriate linguistic and sociocultural features, especially when speaking to one addressee. In contrast, former students might find it more challenging, as nonnative speakers, to manage conversations in the target language with multiple people, because the situation might increase the speakers' level of anxiety.

Strategic Competence

I used the following two Likert-type statements in the survey to see what Japanese instructors think of the strategic competence developed by their students at the Institute:

Q17. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well to develop skills to rephrase when they forget or don't know a particular word.

Q18. You believe that the former students have developed skills to use different words or phrases when they don't know a particular word to use in order to continue conversation.

Table 14 shows the distributions of participants' answers and the mean scores and standard deviations for those two questions.

Table 14

Instructors' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Strategic Competence Instruction With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q17	0	0.0	1	8.3	2	16.7	9	75.0	0	0.0	12	100	2.67	0.651
Q18	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	27.3	7	63.6	1	9.1	11	100	2.82	0.603

Note. Q17: The Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well to develop skills to rephrase when they forget or don't know a particular word; Q18: You believe the former students have developed skills to use different words or phrases when they don't know a particular word to use in order to continue conversation.

As shown in Table 14, the majority of the teachers agreed with the first and second Likert-type statements, and the mean scores for these statements were 2.67 and 2.82, respectively.

The feedback provided in the qualitative section revealed that instructors have positive opinions about the strategic competence built by their students, as illustrated in the following comments:

- Yes, students learn how to do so through our everyday speaking practice.
- Yes, because they acquired the skill while they were studying here.
- Through monthly speaking tests and daily speaking practices, we taught the students how to communicate with native Japanese speakers in that situation.
- We prepare them for this situation, and most of the students learn how to do it. We emphasize communication rather than specific words or grammatical

patterns, and encourage students to try to say what they want to say utilizing what they know.

Some instructors thought the acquisition of this skill depends on the students, as the following remarks indicate:

- Teachers instruct on how to rephrase or encourage students to do so, yet it is up to them.
- Some students might have needed more time to develop the skills before they went to Japan.
- It depends on the students, but I believe most of the students can.

One instructor stated that the acquisition of rephrasing skills

- entirely depends on the content. For something simple, I think the students are able to express what they want in different ways.

One teacher mentioned the influence of technology on learning Japanese: Technological lexical aid such as smartphone applications and handy online dictionaries are increasingly counterproductive in developing strategic competence.

Some survey participants said that most students developed the skill to rephrase vocabulary or structure when they cannot recall particular words in the midst of communication. The following is a summary of the comments:

- They would use different vocabulary with which they can convey the same meaning, or they provide extra explanations in order to continue the conversation.
- Another tool which is used by the graduates when they need to keep carrying on conversation is to use English even when speaking in Japanese.

- If the students are required to speak Japanese for their work, they would adopt neither rephrasing nor explaining. In that case, they would probably choose appropriate words from a dictionary. When talking to friends, those non-native speakers are probably much more eager to convey their opinions, feelings, or experiences. Another important factor in conveying what the speaker wants to say even when s/he doesn't have proper linguistic expressions is the level of mutual trust and understanding: It often happens that addressees whom the speaker knows well, whom the speaker often talks to in the target language, and who know the communication habits often adopted by the speaker might have developed a better understanding of the speaker using extra-perception or intuition.

Instructor said, in speaking about the strategies former students can use when they do not understand the utterances made by the addressee, that students have no problem managing the situation; they can keep saying "I didn't get it," "I didn't understand it," or "Please say it again" and they should not be embarrassed to use those expressions because students at the Institute consistently use them in class. However, one instructor pointed out that the students' personalities affect the use of strategies for communication.

Because all of the interview participants are bilingual, they shared their opinions about strategic competence, recalling their own experiences in learning a second language or foreign language. Most instructors were positive about the strategies the Institute's graduates may use when communicating in the target language because those strategies are commonly used in daily activities at the Institute.

Curriculum Materials and Speaking Practice

I used the following four Likert-type statements to collect instructors' opinions about the materials they use when teaching and the hours of speaking practice offered daily:

Q20. The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing listening skills.

Q21. The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing reading skills.

Q22. The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing writing skills.

Q23. The Japanese program at the Institute provides reasonable amounts of speaking practice.

Table 15 shows the distribution of the answers to these questions. The mean scores and standard deviations for these four statements appear in Table 15. The mean scores for Questions 20, 21, and 23 are 2.83, 3.08, and 2.92, respectively, as most instructors selected *Agree* or *Strongly agree* in response to those three statements. In contrast, the majority of the instructors expressed negative opinions about Question 22, choosing either *Disagree* or *Strongly disagree*.

Table 15

Instructors' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Curriculum Materials and Speaking Practice With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q20	0	0.0	1	8.3	2	16.7	7	58.3	2	16.7	12	100	2.83	0.835
Q21	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	8	66.7	3	25.0	12	100	3.08	0.793
Q22	3	25.0	6	50.0	1	8.4	1	8.3	1	8.3	12	100	1.25	1.215
Q23	0	0.0	1	8.3	3	25.0	4	33.3	4	33.3	12	100	2.92	0.996

Note. Q20: The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing listening skills; Q21: The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing reading skills; Q22: The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good materials for developing writing skills; Q23: The Japanese program at the Institute provides reasonable amounts of speaking practice.

The comments that explain the mean score for each quantitative statement follow:

- For listening, it depends on the teachers. Some teachers use more variety of listening materials than others.
- While students use the main textbook, they are exposed to very little listening or reading materials other than what is in the textbook. When they are finished with the textbook, they have a wave of news reports (both listening and reading). I always felt uneasy with that transition and struggle with finding material suitable for that transition period. What they are exposed to is heavily skewed on what is available to teachers, which is basically news reports. I wished there were pools of listening material that we could choose from. Each teacher spends a significant amount of time looking for authentic materials, especially for listening, as they are much harder to come by. I wished I could

have them listen to two native speakers talking about daily life, interviews between males and females, just more variety.

- Enough listening and reading materials to be able to pass the required scores on their final tests.
- We do not teach writing.
- Since writing is not tested, we spend little time on it beyond acquiring the basics. There is no practice in composition, for example.
- At the Institute, writing is not required, so we do not have a "writing class." Although we, of course, have students practice writing through the activities, it is not as much as listening/reading practice.
- Since this Institute does not focus on writing, and does not test this skill, the amount of materials teachers provide depends on each teacher. Some teachers provide more training to develop the skills, but others do not.
- We could develop more efficient materials if we had more extra time.
- One-on-one speaking lesson with limited instructors is almost the only thing the department does for speaking [practice]. Real-life experience is at a minimum since we are not in Japan.

These comments reveal that instructors struggle in teaching the Japanese language using reasonable materials that follow the curriculum, and believe that something important to introduce to students is missing because of the limited instruction time.

During the interviews, a few instructors shared their opinions about the curriculum materials used at the Institute:

- In teaching the basic course of Japanese at the Institute, one thing I find difficult or frustrating is that the curriculum is constructed to introduce news items right after we finish the core textbooks. Although we still have many vocabulary and grammatical structures to teach that are commonly treated in the higher levels of [Japanese-language Proficiency Test] we have to suddenly change the flow of instruction. The main reason for focusing on the news is that the students are required to understand news items through listening and reading and are required to talk about what is happening in the world as a fact report in order to pass the final listening, reading, and speaking tests at a level higher than 2. Because of this goal, the instructors must prepare their students to achieve the grade that is mandatory for graduating from the Institute.
- Because of the different flow of instruction, we cannot cover topics commonly introduced in [Japanese-language Proficiency Test]such as Japanese cultures and current events in Japan. We cannot integrate conversations at the intermediate and advanced levels with the curriculum materials, either. We don't have time. After introducing the news, next are social issues.

These comments illustrate instructors' frustrations in teaching the Japanese language: they are unable to adopt important materials to develop the communicative competence that students need when living and working in Japan.

Teaching Methodology

The last part of the questionnaire used for this study concerns the teaching methodology. I used four Likert-type statements to collect Japanese instructors' opinions

about the teaching methodology they commonly adopt when teaching Japanese at the Institute:

Q25. The teaching methodology used for building grammatical competence is good.

Q26. The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to use language in a culturally appropriate way is good.

Q27. The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to make utterances sequentially, or with proper arrangement, is good.

Q28. The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to rephrase unknown words is good.

Table 16 shows the distributions of each of the answers chosen by instructors, and shows the mean score and standard deviation for each question.

Table 16

Instructors' Responses to Statements on the Effectiveness of the Teaching Methodology With Means and Standard Deviations

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Total			
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Mean	*SD*
Q25	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	25.0	8	66.7	1	8.3	12	100	2.83	0.577
Q26	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	16.7	9	75.0	1	8.3	12	100	2.92	0.515
Q27	0	0.0	1	8.3	3	25.0	7	58.4	1	8.3	12	100	2.67	0.778
Q28	0	0.0	1	8.3	4	33.4	6	50.0	1	8.3	12	100	2.58	0.793

Note. Q25: The teaching methodology used for building students' grammatical competence is good; Q26: The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to use language in a culturally appropriate way is good; Q27: The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to make utterances sequentially, or with proper arrangement, is good; Q28: The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to rephrase unknown words is good.

Instructors provided several written opinions to explain their views in three areas: (a) teaching focuses on the final tests, (b) teaching methodology varies depending on the instructors, and (c) teaching effectiveness depends on the students. The following are the opinions written by some instructors:

- Students are often trained to do "right" in the speaking test (OPI), and it is not the best way to teach speaking.
- I believe that the students have different teachers who have different ways of conducting classes. Thus, it is hard to say they are always exposed to sound teaching methodology, as each instructor brings his/her own beliefs into the classroom.
- Not all teachers emphasize the same things or are equally effective with all students (differences in learning preferences can affect teaching effectiveness, for example).
- Some students needed more time and attention for learning the language.

These comments revealed that teachers have to make compromises in their teaching methodology to accomplish curriculum goals, even if they do not believe this is the right way to develop true communicative competence. These comments also suggested that one methodology that works well in one class might not be effective when teaching a different class because each class comprises different students with different learning styles/preferences, motivations, interests, and work-related needs.

All educator interview participants admitted they would like to introduce a variety of exercises and activities with which students can practice linguistic features, integrating important sociocultural issues, and develop discourse competence and strategic

competence; they also emphasized the need to spend sufficient time on each topic to help students feel confident about their new skills. However, it is impossible for them to teach what they believe to be more important because this would mean derailing from the Institute's curriculum.

Summary

Summary of Findings through Graduates' Feedback

The data collected through mixed methods revealed much valuable information on the effectiveness of the intensive Japanese-language program. Quantitative results showed that the majority of former students expressed satisfaction with the instruction they received to build four components of communicative competence. In the qualitative responses, those survey participants also provided some criticisms, believing there is always more to learn when studying a foreign language.

Regarding linguistic and sociocultural competences, many former students mentioned they occasionally had problems with linguistic features commonly used in informal situations. Because of very scarce opportunities to practice the casual style of communication at school, many graduates said that they did not feel comfortable using styles that show the speakers' gender, colloquial styles, teenagers' language, and regional accents when speaking Japanese informally. The discussion on building discourse competence revealed that most survey respondents occasionally adopted improper expressions due to psychological pressures when speaking to someone spontaneously, when getting interference from the speaker's native language, and when having insufficient vocabulary.

In discussing strategic competence, former students spoke about four strategies they use to manage communication, even when they do not have the vocabulary or the grammatical structures to continue a conversation: (a) describing/explaining the concept, (b) rephrasing, (c) using English, and (d) using an electronic dictionary. Many graduates were very positive about their acquisition of strategic competence at the Institute. One student stated that the emphasis on communication strategies was extremely helpful, enabling him to convey the message he wanted even when he lacked the proper words.

Regarding the curriculum materials used at the Institute to develop communicative competence, most former students thought they had good materials for developing listening and reading skills; however, several graduates wrote that they did not receive much instruction on developing writing skills. Especially those who studied at the Staff College pointed out the lack of writing practice at the Institute, because they must write reports in proper Japanese. Therefore, the Institute's current curriculum is lacking in developing one skill that some students need for their work assignments.

When discussing teaching methodology used at the Institute, former students noted that two specific teaching methodologies were quite useful: repetition and rephrasing or explaining vocabulary when they have problems recalling a particular word they require.

Furthermore, some respondents provided very promising opinions. Noting that the acquisition of a foreign language and culture cannot be accomplished in just 1.5 years, one survey participant said he does not think one can really understand a foreign culture until living in the midst of it. Another comment that manifested the student's positive learning attitude was made on adopting improper expressions: making mistakes and

occasionally encountering very embarrassing situations are unavoidable for any second-language learner because they are part of the learning process. Accumulating those experiences, the learners of any language gradually make improvements in the skills necessary for communication.

Positive and negative comments provided by students are quite valuable for improving the quality of the Japanese program at the Institute. The criticisms made by former students are key elements the Institute should consider to improve the curriculum. As commented by many study participants, learners must continue to acquire skills in each component of communicative competence if they want to keep improving. As suggested by some survey participants, the Institute should consider offering refresher courses or more advanced courses in which graduates can further develop their communicative competence in Japanese.

Summary of Findings through Instructors' Feedback

Lower quantitative figures and feedback provided as responses to the qualitative questions reflected instructors' intricate feelings about assisting their students in developing communicative competence at the Institute. Except for strategic competence, which their students build well while studying the target language at the Institute, the survey results revealed that most instructors face dilemmas when assisting their students to build other components of communicative competence.

In developing students' linguistic and sociocultural competences, instructors identified insufficient teaching time. Even though they thought it necessary to teach more important linguistic features such as advanced levels of vocabulary and grammar, and to improve students' pronunciation and writing skills, they must put them aside because

they are required to prepare students for final tests. All instructors acknowledged that their former students would experience problems with casual speech styles, honorific and humble speech styles, speech styles that reveal the speaker's gender, regional dialects, and peculiar Japanese expressions commonly used by people of a particular age group. Yet, those instructors believe they are unable to include these weak areas in the course due to the limited instruction time. Many instructors are aware that the sociocultural issues they teach at the Institute are rather superficial.

Discussing discourse competence, instructors believed graduates do not have trouble when speaking the target language in one-on-one situations because they are trained to speak Japanese under those circumstances. However, they assume it might be more challenging for nonnative speakers to manage conversations without problems when speaking to multiple people because the situation might increase the speaker's level of anxiety.

The survey revealed that instructors struggle to teach the Japanese language with reasonable materials at the Institute, following the curriculum. Survey participants often believed that something important to introduce to students is missing due to the limited instruction time. Furthermore, writing materials are not commonly used because the curriculum of the Institute does not require developing writing skills.

Comments provided by instructors indicated they have to make compromises to accomplish the curriculum goals, even if this stance does not allow them to develop true communicative competence. During the interview, participants admitted they would prefer teaching a variety of exercises and activities with which the students can practice linguistic features that integrate important sociocultural issues and develop discourse and

strategic competence; they would also like to be able to spend enough time on each topic to feel confident about the skills acquired by students. However, they cannot teach what they believe to be more important because this would mean deviating from the Institute's curriculum.

Summary of Findings

Former students and instructors who participated in the survey and interviews offered surprisingly similar comments when talking about building linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Although instructors believed they would like to introduce what former students pointed out as important missing features, they are unable to make drastic changes unless the Institute revises the curriculum based on what graduates have experienced.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Overview

This chapter consists of eight sections. The first section presents the initial summary of language-program-evaluation studies, including the need for this study and its purpose, theoretical rationale, and methodology. In the second section, I discuss the findings (quantitative and qualitative) from the graduates' perspective. In the third section I discuss the findings (quantitative and qualitative) from instructors' perspective. The fourth section presents a discussion of the research questions, and the fifth section provides recommendations to the program and the Institute. In the sixth section, I discuss communicative competence as a framework for college-level foreign-language study. In the seventh section, I discuss the theoretical framework adopted for this study. The eighth section includes recommendations for future research, and the ninth section contains my thoughts on program evaluation. In the last section, I draw conclusions from this study.

Initial Summary of the Study

Although program-evaluation studies reveal useful information on teaching languages, they comprise two important flaws. The first deficit is the insufficient literature on issues related to language-program evaluation. Even though scholars have identified this problem for over 20 years (Beretta, 1992; Lynch, 1990; Norris, 2008, 2009), it persists. The second problem is the unsatisfactory manner to conduct and interpret the findings, and the failure to share useful findings about language programs in detail (Yang, 2009).

Students who take a language course have a major goal to develop communicative competence (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Three scholars highlighted several problems in developing the four components of communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic) in postsecondary schools. These obstacles are (a) insufficient emphasis by college language departments on the development of interactive, transactional, and oral language (Byrnes, 2006); (b) a model of instruction that lets foreign-language learners develop a tourist-like competence (Kramsch, 2006); (c) insufficient instruction time (Schulz, 2006); (d) lack of appropriate contexts (Schulz, 2006); and (e) few opportunities for students to interact with native speakers of the target language (Schulz, 2006). Even though these problems could be explained by conducting program evaluations, very few studies provide evaluative explanations; therefore, research that addresses these problematic issues is necessary. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Japanese program offered at a government-sponsored multiservice school located in California. The focus was to see whether the program provides culturally based foreign-language education that learners can use to communicate with native Japanese speakers and to complete their work assignments in Japan.

Two theories adopted for this research are the CAM, developed by Lynch (1990, 1996, 2003), and a pedagogical perspective on communicative competence. The CAM for evaluation consists of seven components: (a) audience and goals, (b) context inventory, (c) preliminary thematic framework, (d) data-collection design/system, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, and (g) evaluation report. Celce-Murcia (2007) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) revised the four components of communicative competence

developed by Canale (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980). Discourse competence is the core or central competence and includes six components of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). Four of those six components—linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence—constitute the theoretical rationale for this study.

I collected the data for this research through mixed methods and in multiple phases, including a web-based survey consisting of a Likert-type scale and open-ended questions and open-ended interviews with former students of the Institute and instructors currently teaching at the Institute. I analyzed all responses thoroughly and discussed the findings based on each component of communicative competence.

Summary of Findings from Graduates' Responses

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings from this study showed that graduates of the Institute are satisfied with the quality of instruction they received and the communicative competence they developed while studying the Japanese language at the school. Former students gave high scores to all four components of communicative competence, and the mean scores for each statement concerning a component of communicative competence ranged from 3.00 (*agree*) to 3.63 (where 4 is *strongly agree*), except for the lower mean score (2.69) of their speaking accent. Survey participants thought the Japanese program prepared them well in building linguistic concepts, in using the language in a culturally appropriate way, in organizing expressions sequentially or in the proper order, and in developing skills to rephrase when they forgot or did not know a particular word.

However, participants thought it important to continue expanding their grammatical skills and vocabulary because the ones they acquired at the Institute are insufficient.

Most former students provided positive responses on the sociocultural, discourse, and strategic competences they developed at the Institute. Yet, many students also said they experienced miscommunication and embarrassing situations. Sometimes students had difficulty continuing a conversation in Japanese.

Students also evaluated the quality of the materials used to develop their four linguistic skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). All quantitative results except those concerning writing skills, were in the range of 3.00 to 3.54. The mean score for writing was 2.37, significantly lower than the others. Students also evaluated the teaching methodologies used to develop linguistic, sociocultural, discourse, and strategic competences. The materials used to build the components of communicative competence were given high ratings and the quantitative results ranged from 3.26 to 3.46.

Overall, the quantitative responses provided by former students of the Institute revealed positive thoughts about the communicative competence they built while studying at the Institute. Following is a discussion of the qualitative findings. Findings may help explain the lower result on writing skills.

Qualitative Findings

Most survey participants evaluated the Japanese course they took as a basic course; for a basic course, they were satisfied with the quality of the instruction, which they considered to be the foundation for further study of the Japanese language. Survey participants thought of foreign-language study as a lifetime task: some graduates mentioned it would be impossible to fully acquire a foreign language and culture in 64

weeks of instruction, and one cannot truly understand a foreign culture until living in the target country.

The negative experiences of former students when communicating in Japanese can provide valuable suggestions to the Japanese program. Concerning linguistic and sociocultural competences, graduates pointed out that instructors should take more time to introduce and let students practice casual-speech styles because many native Japanese speakers speak casually to them. Because they did not spend much time practicing it, the casual style was unfamiliar to these former students and they did not feel comfortable using it, even when they thought it would be appropriate in a particular situation. As a result, survey participants experienced awkward communication in Japanese: Although their Japanese friends or coworkers in an informal situation spoke casually to them, participants kept using the formal style, creating peculiar verbal exchanges.

Answers to questions on building discourse competence revealed that it is unavoidable for foreign-language learners to make mistakes or to encounter very embarrassing situations when communicating in the target language. Some factors may prevent students from communicating properly: (a) psychological pressure when speaking spontaneously, (b) interference from the speaker's native language, or (c) lack of vocabulary. Although these nonnative speakers acknowledged that those factors interrupt their communication in Japanese, they considered those negative experiences part of the learning experience. The negative experiences are important because they prompt learners to find alternative solutions, so that they will be less puzzled when encountering the same situation again. Thus, the more embarrassing occasions foreign-language learners encounter, the less recurrent mistakes they make.

Concerning strategic competence, this research revealed that survey participants commonly employ four strategies to communicate when they lack the vocabulary or syntax to continue a conversation: (a) provide additional descriptions or explanations, (b) rephrase, (c) speak in English, and (d) use an electronic dictionary. Especially when they talked about the first and the second of these tools, students expressed positive opinions about the strategic competence they developed at the Institute. Several research participants thought it quite important to learn how to develop strategic competence that aids nonnative speakers in continuing conversations, even when they have problems with a particular linguistic expression.

Although most survey participants thought the curriculum materials used at the Institute were good, some of them, especially those who studied at a staff college right after completing the Japanese program at the Institute, thought they did not receive enough instruction or materials to develop writing skills. Those who study at the college in Japan must occasionally submit written reports in the target language, and need to have formal writing skills to complete the reports. Former students attributed the lack of this skill to the Institute's curriculum; even though it is mandatory for students to develop listening, reading, and speaking skills, acquiring good writing skills is not emphasized or is considered less important. Moving forward, this should be an important consideration for Institute administrators. As some participants suggested, a solution could be offering refresher courses or more advanced courses in which the students can further develop their communication skills, including their writing skills.

Many former students commented on another important issue regarding the curriculum of the Institute: the flow of instruction. Currently, soon after students finish

the main textbooks used to build their basic linguistic skills, they must study mainly news items on different topics. According to several former students, the steps they needed to follow to develop communicative competence were not very effective. Those students believed it was more useful to them to expand their knowledge of vocabulary and structures at the intermediate and advanced levels rather than listening to the news or reading newspapers. Graduates understood the curriculum is geared to the need to prepare them for the final listening, reading, and speaking proficiency tests. Curriculum designers developed the curriculum for all students, no matter what language they studied at the Institute, to achieve at least Level 2 in the listening and reading proficiency tests, and Level 1+ or higher in speaking the target language; because the tests include listening and reading exercises based on news reports, the track of instruction abruptly deviates toward meeting the curriculum requirement. Some graduates opined that the Institute prepares students well to take those final tests, but not to develop Japanese for everyday use.

Graduates' negative experiences when communicating in the target language should be important considerations for the Japanese program to improve the quality of instruction. It is also important for the Institute to modify the curriculum based on students' future work assignments, given that the goal of the Institute is as follows:

> The main goal is to ensure that graduates meet the requirements of the agency that has assigned them to foreign language study. Students must therefore be provided instructional programs that are responsive to the foreign language needs of a wide variety of (national security) positions throughout the world. The Institute's

programs must meet high standards so that functional language skills can be developed for professional use in real-world communication situations.

Because the work assignments of current students are very different from those of students who studied the Japanese language a few decades ago, the Institute should review its curriculum and make necessary changes to help students accomplish their work.

Summary of Findings through Instructors' Responses

Quantitative Findings

The mean scores of responses provided by the Institutes' instructors about the curriculum's effectiveness in developing communicative competence are in the range of 1.25 to 3.08. The lowest mean score of 1.25 emerged on linguistic competence, indicating that the majority of instructors believe it important for students to continue improving their understanding of grammatical structure, even after they finish their studies at the Institute. Many Japanese teachers believed their former students will occasionally have serious grammatical problems when communicating in Japanese in Japan, and are not satisfied with the amount of vocabulary they teach at the Institute.

With regard to sociocultural competence, instructors felt more positive about having prepared their students well in using the target language in a culturally appropriate way. However, teachers did not believe their students would be able to perfectly use culturally appropriate Japanese expressions or avoid embarrassing situations due to socioculturally mistaken use of Japanese. Regarding the discourse competence developed by their students, half the instructors chose *Neither agree nor disagree* as an answer, and the mean score for this statement was 2.42. As the low mean score of 1.08 shows, most teachers believed their students failed to organize proper utterances or made mistakes in

the expressions they used. In response to the questions concerning the strategic competence developed by their former students, more teachers answered positively, as the mean scores of 2.67 and 2.82 show.

The most positive opinions shown by instructors concerned curriculum materials used to develop listening and reading skills and speaking practice. The numerical values of 2.83, 3.08, and 2.92 indicate instructors' confidence in the quality of the materials they chose. In contrast to scores for those three skills, the score related to materials used to improve students' writing skill was 1.25, which is extremely low. For teaching methodologies used to develop learners' communicative competence, more instructors responded positively, yielding numerical values of 2.83, 2.92, 2.67, and 2.58.

Results of the quantitative analysis revealed some extremely low mean scores. The qualitative findings explain the reasons instructors evaluated three areas with the low mean scores of 1.25 ("the graduates don't need to improve grammatical structures after completing the study of Japanese at the Institute"), 1.08 ("the graduates have never failed to organize proper utterance, or they have no deviation in the expressions they use"), and 1.25 ("the Japanese program provides the students with good materials for developing writing skills").

Qualitative Findings

Japanese instructors shared their concerns about developing each component of communicative competence. In speaking of linguistic competence, their special concerns related to eight areas: (a) necessity of more advanced grammar, (b) basic nature of the course they teach at the Institute, (c) dependence on the students' work assignments, (d) dependence on the individual student, (e) necessity of continuing training for students,

(f) insufficient instruction time for building linguistic competence, (g) insufficient instruction time for improving students' pronunciation, and (h) insufficient instruction time to develop writing skills. In the interview, six instructors said that although they believe they should introduce many important linguistic features to the students, they do not have time to do so because they need to prepare students to take the final tests.

Responding to questions about sociocultural competence, instructors shared concerns in six areas: (a) proper use of casual speech styles, (b) impossibility to teach all aspects of culture, (c) dependence on the individual student, (d) limited time to let students use learned expressions that directly reflect sociocultural norms, (e) necessity to acquire many sociocultural issues in the foreign country, and (f) difficulties for nonnative instructors to keep up with new cultural trends. Regarding speech styles adopted by graduates, most instructors thought former students would experience problems with speech styles such as casual styles, honorific and humble speech styles, speech styles that reveal the speaker's gender, regional dialects, and peculiar Japanese expressions commonly used by people of a particular age group. Working under time pressure, many instructors believed the sociocultural issues they teach at the Institute are rather superficial.

In regard to discourse competence, instructors believed students who have good speaking skills, especially if associated with excellent use skills, can converse with well-organized expressions. According to some teachers, people who developed good speaking skills make less mistakes when speaking in the target language in one-on-one situations because their speaking practice took place under the same circumstances. However, those teachers assumed it might be more challenging for the same speakers to

interact with multiple people because the speaker's level of anxiety would increase. When discussing whether graduates acquired strategic competence while studying Japanese at the Institute, most instructors responded positively, because this is the competence they consistently teach at the Institute.

In discussing the materials they use at the Institute, teachers expressed another reason for frustration. Because all instructors of the Institute must follow the curriculum, they cannot adopt materials they feel are necessary for students when living and working in Japan. Even if instructors think it is important to teach particular materials to develop writing skills, they cannot take the time to do so because the curriculum of the Institute does not require developing writing skills.

Three opinions arose on teaching methodologies from instructors: (a) teaching is for the final tests, (b) teaching methodology varies depending on instructor, and (c) teaching effectiveness depends on students. For the first opinion, instructors showed frustration in compromising on teaching methods to accomplish curricular goals. For the second opinion, each instructor adopts a different approach, even when teaching the same materials. For the last opinion, instructors noted that a particular method that works well in one class might not be effective with another.

The comments made by both former students and instructors on the qualitative questions indicated that concerns they have in building communicative competence are quite similar. Graduates pointed out that the important features missing from instruction provided at the Institute are what instructors think would be important to teach. However, instructors cannot teach those features due to the curriculum.

Discussions of Research Questions

The research questions for this study were the following:

1. How effective is the Japanese language program at the Institute in helping students build communicative competence?
2. Does the Institute provide a curriculum and cultural information that helps students build communicative competence?
3. What are students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program in building students' communicative competence?

The quantitative findings obtained from the analysis of former students' survey responses answered the first research question. Although survey participants thought they needed to continue improving their grammatical skills, vocabulary, and pronunciation, they answered all the questions quite positively concerning how well the Institute prepared them in building linguistic, sociocultural, discourse, and strategic competence. All mean scores for these questions were higher than 3.0 (*agree*). Positive comments collected through the qualitative questions supported the quantitative results. Therefore, the answer to the first research question is a positive one: The basic Japanese course at the Institute is quite effective in helping students build communicative competence.

Similar to the first research question, the quantitative analysis positively supported the second question. The answer to the second research question is positive when looking at the numerical values. However, the qualitative findings revealed that some former students would prefer developing communicative competence that is useful

for daily life rather than doing well on the required final tests. Moreover, those who study or studied at a staff college in Tokyo had a hard time writing formal reports in Japanese because the curriculum of the Institute does not emphasize the development of writing skills. Therefore, the answers to this second research question vary, depending on individual students' responses. Whereas some former students felt the Institute provided them with useful curriculum and cultural information to develop communicative competence, some thought that the program lacked instruction that was important for them.

Former students answered the third research question with positive and negative comments. The first positive perception the survey participants have is that they are very satisfied with the instruction they received at the Institute. Many former students provided positive feedback such as "I was 100% satisfied with my experience at the Institute," "The language training at the Institute was phenomenal," and "Great program for establishing a solid foundation from which to further build.". Several students stated the Institute provided them with the foundations they needed to be confident in everyday situations in Japan. Those people thought that the program at the Institute is amazing because in only a year and a half they developed the communicative competence they needed to carry on conversations with native Japanese speakers quite comfortably. For those people, the survey questions asking about communication problems they might have encountered while speaking to native Japanese speakers in Japan are odd, because any graduates who go to Japan with the goal of improving their Japanese beyond the foundational level taught at the Institute experience problems in grammar, vocabulary,

culture, speaking, and so on. Those people further commented that this is exactly how one improves language skills.

Survey participants also provided some criticisms of the program, particular in the areas of speaking practice, writing exercises, and the emphasis put on the final proficiency tests. Although 1-hour one-on-one speaking practice is offered daily at the Institute, some former students thought this was insufficient. As discussed above, those who study at a staff college in Tokyo right after they finish the Japanese course at the Institute have problems when writing formal reports in Japanese. Because the curriculum of the Institute does not emphasize the acquisition of writing skills, the writing assignments given at the staff college penalize those people, especially at the beginning. Although those former students seemed to gradually overcome the problems, thanks to assistance from their Japanese classmates, the lack of writing skills is a marked shortcoming for them when evaluating the Japanese program at the Institute.

The emphasis the program puts on the final proficiency tests is another critique graduates of the Institute described. Whereas some interviewees said that studying news items is important because their work requires them to know what is happening in the world, some said that they do not talk about news in Japanese at all. Obviously, whether it is important to study the news depends on former students' work assignments. Thus, the criticisms varied with the types of work assignments the graduates of the Institute had. Therefore, an appropriate answer to the third research question is that some former students are very satisfied with the effectiveness of the program in building communicative competence; however, some students feel the program fails to emphasize some important skills. Some instructors noted that the quality of building linguistic

competence depends on the students' work assignments. Thus, answers to the second and third research questions vary considerably.

The last research question queried teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program. The answer is that instructors teaching Japanese at the Institute struggle to teach the Japanese language. Their frustration arises because they would like to introduce more topics to their students, but they cannot. For example, in regard to building linguistic competence, teachers believed they should take more time to introduce advanced grammar, to improve students' pronunciation, and to improve students' writing skills. In building sociocultural competence, instructors noted it would be necessary for students to have more time to practice different speech styles, especially casual styles, and to use learned expressions that directly reflect sociocultural norms. However, teachers cannot teach what they feel is necessary due to the limited instruction time and the need to follow the curriculum of the Institute. Unless the Institute revises the current curriculum, instructors of Japanese will not be able to teach important linguistic features.

Recommendations for the Program and the Institute

As a result of findings from quantitative and qualitative questions used in this study, I recommend changes at the program level and institutional level. At the program level, all instructors should think of effective way to teach various speech styles, because former students commented on this issue with reference to building linguistic and sociocultural competence. Teaching methods, practical drills, and exercises, as well as role plays that can develop skills of different speech styles should be reviewed. Because the textbooks used at the Japanese program introduce different speech styles, ideas to develop students' skills should be developed and implemented.

I provide two main recommendations for the Institute to consider. The first recommendation is that the Japanese curriculum should be adjusted on the basis of students' needs after they finish studying the core textbooks. As one former student pointed out, the purposes for which the students study foreign languages at the Institute are diverse. The majority of students who study other languages at the Institute work as voice interceptors who perform and supervise "detection, acquisition, location, identification and exploitation of foreign communications," cryptologists, and interrogators after the completion of the coursework at the Institute (armyenlist.com, n.d.). However, most students who study Japanese work with their Japanese counterparts in national-security jobs or take classes with Japanese classmates at a staff college. Therefore, the curriculum used at the Institute fits the majority of students but does not fit the purpose of the students studying the Japanese language. For this reason, the Institute divides the basic course in two: One course for students who need to prepare for the OPI and the listening and reading proficiency tests administered at the Institute at the end of the coursework, and another course for students who need to develop specific communicative competence to accomplish their special work assignments. These students may require an extended course.

The second recommendation for the Institute is that administrators should undertake program evaluations like the present study to grasp what is happening at the program and learn what changes are necessary. It is also important for administrators to communicate with instructors and students and to promptly make necessary program adjustments. In order not to waste instruction time and to effectively improve students' communicative competence necessary not only for accomplishing their future work

assignments but also for living in the country where the target language is spoken, Japanese instructors and administrators should consider the recommendations of this study.

Implication of Communicative Competence as a Framework for College-Level Foreign-Language Study

I discussed communicative competence as a framework for college-level foreign-language study in Chapter 1. Byrnes (2006) discussed the central questions of the role of foreign language in higher education and the educational purposes, goals, and outcomes of foreign-language study. Byrnes was critical of college language departments that focus on teaching the development of oral language skills that are neither articulated nor considered desirable and indispensable. Further, Byrnes stated that a reconsideration of program goals and objectives is necessary because of two factors: (a) the acquisition of less commonly taught languages such as Japanese, whose script and cultural contexts are very different from those commonly used in the United States, obviously requires much more time and effort to reach a particular level of proficiency; and (b) even students who study commonly taught languages such as Spanish and French are barely able to reach an intermediate level of communicative abilities by the end of the sequential language courses. This is the same level of proficiency achieved by students who participate in a one-semester study-abroad program.

Kramsch (2006) commented that people must have competency and not just efficiency when communicating with others in a global age, because today language learners have more opportunities to encounter multilingual individuals who hold a variety of values and ideologies compared to the 1970s, when the notion of communicative

competence was introduced in foreign-language study. Kramsch suggested that educators should focus more on form, genre, style, and register, and should carefully observe how linguistic forms such as the words chosen by speakers represents their thoughts. Obviously, learners must spend much more time to acquire the competencies discussed by Kramsch.

Schulz (2006) remarked that the vast majority of learners have problems gaining a meaningful and long-lasting level of language competence predominantly through classroom instruction. According to Schulz, most postsecondary institutions where foreign-language study is considered important for general education offer courses for no more than 4 semesters. The problems Schulz raised are insufficient time, insufficient appropriate contexts, insufficient input, insufficient opportunities to interact with competent users of the target language, and insufficient motivation. Schultz stated it is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for general education foreign-language requirements to develop students' communicative competence because "neither time nor instructional context is sufficient or appropriate to develop a meaningful and lasting level of proficiency" (2006, p. 253). Therefore, Schulz suggested a reexamination and rebalancing of instructional goals and approaches in language-instruction sequences.

At the Institute where this program evaluation was conducted, the foreign-language curriculum is quite different from that of most colleges in the United States. Students studying at the Institute spend enormous amounts of time studying an assigned foreign language; they study nothing else than their target language for 6–7 hours a day for 64 weeks, if their assigned foreign language is a Category IV language. Compared to

the time college students spend to learn a foreign language, the Institute, indeed, offers very intensive language programs.

The answers and feedback collected in this study show that students who studied Japanese (a Category IV language) learn only the foundations of the target language, even after they finish the very intensive coursework. The majority of graduates think the competence they acquired at the Institute was insufficient, and that they must continue improving the four components of communicative competence based on the foundations they developed at the Institute. As manifested by their negative experiences, the target language learners still struggle when communicating with native speakers and make linguistic, sociocultural, discourse, and strategic mistakes in communicating in the target language. Through these mistakes and embarrassments, however, the foreign-language learners gradually make progress in building communicative competence.

A comparison of the foreign-language curricula adopted at most colleges in the United States and those used at the Institute supports the statement made by Schultz (2006) in that it is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for the general education foreign-language requirement to develop students' communicative competence: Most college students have insufficient time, insufficient appropriate contexts, insufficient input, insufficient opportunities to interact with competent users of the target language, or insufficient motivation. Therefore, foreign-language college departments should reexamine and rebalance the instructional goals and approaches in their curricula.

Theoretical Framework Adopted for This Study

I chose two theoretical frameworks for this study. One is the CAM for program evaluation developed by Lynch (1996, 2003). The four main components of

communicative competence identified by Canale (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980) and revised by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) and Celce-Murcia (2007) form the second theoretical foundation of this study. These components are linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

As pointed out by Lynch (1996), the CAM is "a flexible and adaptable heuristic" that should be used "for inquiry into language education program" (p. 3). Following the seven steps of the CAM, my specific concerns in conducting the program evaluation were tailored and practiced. Using this model as one of the theoretical framework, I was able to conduct meaningful research, and collect many important issues on foreign-language education.

The major goal of foreign-language education is to help students develop communicative competence (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). The four components of communicative competence provided another theoretical framework for this study. I developed all questions used in the survey and interviews based on the features of those four components. Participants in the surveys and interviews considered all the questions that represented developing communicative competence. Participants provided positive feedback and criticism, discussed earlier as significant findings.

Combining these two theoretical frameworks, I successfully conducted the foreign-language program evaluation, and collected much useful information. The rich information gleaned from participants and other authors guided the thorough discussion of the findings. As a result, I could complete the study with meaningful implications for foreign-language education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on this program evaluation of the Institute's effectiveness in developing communicative competence, I have three recommendations for future research. The first recommendation concerns the language categories. The second recommendation relates to the goals of the programs, and the third refers to the questions used in surveys and interviews.

The first recommendation for future research addresses the category of the language researched. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Institute divides all foreign languages taught there into four categories, depending on their difficulty. The current study focused on the Japanese language, which belongs to Category IV. Unlike those studying foreign languages in Categories I through III, learners of a Category IV language must master not only complicated linguistic expressions and unfamiliar sociocultural issues, but also very unique writing systems. In learning Japanese, students must learn to read and write in two sets of phonetic writing systems as well as Chinese characters, which are ideographs and do not follow systematic rules. Obviously, acquiring the Japanese language is a very time-consuming endeavor. Evaluating languages of different categories with the same methodology used in this study, however, would provide very different results. Because a broader variety of foreign languages are taught in the United States now compared to several decades ago, it is necessary and meaningful to research those different languages using the same method used in this study. The results of the future studies will be important sources in examining the current curriculum and in making necessary modifications that provide fruitful learning experiences to learners of any foreign languages.

The second recommendation is that future research should be conducted on language programs with different curriculum goals. This study evaluated the Japanese program taught to develop learners' functional language skills necessary for professional use, but language programs with different curricular goals will probably provide very unique results. These results should be another important source for developing better foreign-language curricula.

The last recommendation is to conduct more program-evaluation studies on students' communicative competence using different types of questions to address each component of communicative competence. The questions used in the survey and interviews for the current study related to a very limited area of each component. More elaborate questions that can depict the characteristics of each component should be developed and adopted in future studies.

Researcher's Thoughts on Program Evaluation

As Richards (2001) stated, language program evaluation explains the sources of those problems by investigating how successfully a program works, whether the program responds to the learners' needs, and whether the students are learning sufficiently. Through this research study, many significant findings emerged about building communicative competence, supporting Richards. Responses to quantitative and qualitative questions provided by former students and instructors of the Institute are new information to me, which led me to consider which avenues are more important to teach and which teaching methods are most effective when developing quality instructional materials.

Positive feedback and criticisms shared by former students awakened me, as a foreign-language instructor, preventing me from falling into mannerisms when instructing her native tongue. When managing the busy schedule of teaching assignments, foreign-language teachers are apt not to think how what we adopt in daily teaching affects our learners' communication in the target language. After students leave school, we think little about how our former students live and work, using what we taught. Although I was able to presume some of the comments even before initiating this research, some provided totally unexpected feedback. In gaining positive feedback and criticism, this research provided a very exciting experience, enabling me to learn some viewpoints I had not previously considered.

After completing this study, I also perceive the importance of occasionally conducting program evaluation, because the circumstances where foreign-language education takes place might need adjustment based on curriculum changes to the program. Without thinking of the sources of problems, and without responding to the adjustments, all people working for the program simply continue to sustain the same problems. Educators then neglect the essence of their work, failing to observe how successfully a program works, whether the program responds to learners' needs, and whether students are learning sufficiently (Richards, 2001).

My last thought, after concluding the research on foreign-language program evaluation, is that more studies on program evaluation should be initiated. Many programs have objectives to help students become active learners, varying based on different curricular aims. For example, the Japanese language program in which this study was conducted has very unique curriculum features because it is offered at the

government-sponsored foreign-language Institute, and directly relates to learners' work assignments. Conducting the same type of study on foreign-language programs offered at different levels of schools, such as secondary schools and postsecondary schools, would yield different findings. In the previous chapter, I cited that several scholars described a need for more shared information on foreign-language program evaluation. I believe it is important for foreign-language educators to share any findings obtained through program-evaluation studies conducted on different levels and different languages because findings are key factors in improving the quality of foreign-language education.

Conclusion

I conducted this language-program evaluation in four research stages. In the first stage, I conducted two sets of surveys and interviews with former students and instructors who currently teach Japanese or used to teach the Japanese language at the Institute. The questions used in a section of the survey and interviews concerned how graduates of the Institute think of the communicative competence they developed at the Institute. In another section of survey and interviews, I asked the Institute's instructors for their opinions about teaching Japanese and helping their students developing communicative competence. In the second stage, I thoroughly analyzed all responses collected through quantitative and qualitative questions. The analysis of the surveys and the interviews revealed many important findings, discussed based on the research questions. In the third stage, I made recommendations for instructors and the Institute based on the findings. In the last stage, I examined communicative competence as a framework for college-level foreign-language study, as discussed by several scholars.

This study revealed that the feedback provided by former students mainly fall into four areas. First is that former students are satisfied with the quality of the instruction offered as a basic course at the Institute, which helped them develop good foundations in Japanese. The majority of respondents thought they developed the foundations with which they can make further improvements while working in Japan. Second is that the types of work assignments affect the level of learners' satisfaction in developing competence. For instance, some students who have opportunities to talk to native Japanese speakers in more informal situations felt they lacked casual linguistic structures as well as the ability to use expressions properly in casual settings. Those who are required to write formal reports in Japanese thought they did not have good writing skills. The third area of feedback is that the curriculum of the Institute emphasizes students' learning outcomes, but not what they actually need to accomplish their work in the target language. At the end of their studies, students must show good skills in listening, reading, and speaking as well as sociocultural and ethical knowledge of the target country. The Institute measures these three skills through listening and reading proficiency tests and an oral proficiency interview at the end of the coursework. However, some former students thought it would have been more important for them to spend more time studying advanced grammar and vocabulary, rather than preparing for the final tests. The last opinion expressed by the graduates of the Institute is that improving communicative competence is a life-long effort for learners of any language.

The instructors' responses to the survey and interviews also revealed important findings. While teaching at the Institute following the curriculum, those instructors are occasionally frustrated for two reasons. One is that teachers find it impossible to

introduce all the topics students need to build communicative competence. The second reason for frustration is that instructors have to put too much emphasis on preparing students for the final tests. Even if they think they can impart more significant linguistic features to the students, they have to follow the curriculum because the Institute measures program effectiveness based on the results of students' final tests.

The summary of the findings warrants one recommendation at the program level and a couple at the institutional level. Instructors should think of ways to provide exercises that are effective in developing different speech styles, and should find a good balance of time to introduce a variety of styles. The Institute should revise its current curriculum because the purposes for which students take the language courses have changed compared to several decades ago. Also, courses should be diversified based on students' future work assignments.

Results from this research determined whether communicative competence is a suitable and achievable framework for college-level foreign-language study. Several college professors pointed out deficits in building communicative competence through classroom instruction. Findings from this research supported Schultz's (2006) remark that is it is neither a realistic nor a sufficient goal for the general education foreign-language requirement to develop students' communicative competence. This program-evaluation research yielded many important findings. Language instructors and administrators should follow the suggestions and recommendations of this study to improve the quality of foreign-language education.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Amendment Approved

To: Yukiko Konishi
From: Terence Patterson, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #492
Date: 07/06/2016

Dear Yukiko Konishi:

Your Amendment for research (IRB Protocol #**492**) with the project title **BUILDING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INTENSIVE JAPANESE-LANGUAGE PROGRAM** has been approved by the IRB Chair on **07/06/2016**.

Any modifications, adverse reactions or complications must be reported using a modification application to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS via email at IRBPHS@usfca.edu. Please include the protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP

Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

University of San Francisco

irbphs@usfca.edu

https://www.axiommentor.com/pages/home.cfm

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

For Students

DIRECTION: PLEASE ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF.

1. What year did you graduate from the Institute?

2. What were the results of the last Listening and Reading proficiency tests, and OPI? Choose the number that shows each of your language skills.

	0+	1	1+	2	2+	3	3+	4
Listening:	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Reading:	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
OPI:	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

3. Where did (do) you work in Japan?

4. Did (do) you often communicate with the Japanese people while you were (are) working in Japan?

5. How long did you stay in Japan? / How long have you been in Japan?

Survey Questions for Students

Section 2

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

6. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well in building grammatical concepts such as sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

   - O Strongly disagree
   - O Disagree
   - O Neither agree nor disagree
   - O Agree
   - O Strongly agree

7. You didn't have serious problems at all in constructing grammatically correct Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers.

   - O Strongly disagree
   - O Disagree
   - O Neither agree nor disagree
   - O Agree
   - O Strongly agree

8. You often thought (think) that the grammatical instruction you received at the Institute was sufficient.

   - O Strongly disagree
   - O Disagree
   - O Neither agree nor disagree
   - O Agree
   - O Strongly agree

9. Add any comments.

10. While you stayed (stay) in Japan, you had (have) no needs to improve your grammatical knowledge for better communication..

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

11. The amount of vocabulary you acquired at the Institute was sufficient.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

12. You feel comfortable when speaking Japanese because of your good accent in Japanese.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

13. Add any comments or episodes you would like to share about grammatical use, word formation, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

Survey Questions for Students

Section 3

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

14. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well in using Japanese in a culturally appropriate way (such as formality and politeness)

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

15. You didn't have any serious problems in using culturally appropriate Japanese expressions at all when talking to native Japanese speakers.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

16. You have not experienced being in a very embarrassing situation because the Japanese expressions you used are culturally appropriate.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

17. Add any comments or report any incident you like to share about your experiences with culturally appropriate language uses.

Survey Questions for Students

Section 4

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

18. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared you well to organize expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement, so that you successfully used unified spoken or written expressions.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

19. You didn't have occasions in which miscommunication occurred because you organized proper utterance, or had no deviation in the expressions used.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

20. Please share your experience in failing communication.

Survey Questions for Students

Section 5

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

21. You think that you have developed skills to rephrase when you forget or when you don't know a particular word.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

22. You didn't have occasions when you felt it was hard to continue communicating with native Japanese speakers since you don't have correct words to use.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

23. When you have experiences that you couldn't recall the words you really needed to use, what did you do?

Survey Questions for Students

Section 6

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

24. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing listening skills.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

25. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing reading skills.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

26. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had good learning materials for developing writing skills.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

27. While you were studying Japanese at the Institute, you think you had a reasonable amount of speaking practice.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

28. Add any comments or suggestions you have regarding the learning materials used at the Institute.

Survey Questions for Students

Section 7

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

29. The teaching methodology used for building grammatical competence was good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

30. The teaching methodology used for improving skills to use language in a culturally appropriate way was good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

31. The teaching methodology used for improving skills to make utterances srquentially or with proper arrangement was good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

32. The teaching methodology used for improving skills to rephrase unknown words was good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

33. Add any comments or suggestions you have regarding teaching methodology used at the Institute.

Survey Questions for Students

Section 8

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

34. Provide any comments, suggestions, and feedback which may be useful for improving the quality of the Japanese program at the Institute.

Thank you for your crucial participation in this survey.

APPENDIX C

SURVEY QUESTIONS

For Instructors

DIRECTION: PLEASE ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF.

1. How many years have you taught Japanese at the Institute?

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 2

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

2. You think that the Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well in building grammatical concepts such as sentence patterns, word formations, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

3. You believe that the former students had no serious problems at all in constructing grammatically correct Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers.

   - ○ Strongly disagree
   - ○ Disagree
   - ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   - ○ Agree
   - ○ Strongly agree

4. You believe that the Japanese program at the Institute provides sufficient instruction to build students' grammatical knowledge.

   - ○ Strongly disagree
   - ○ Disagree
   - ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   - ○ Agree
   - ○ Strongly agree

5. Add any comments.

6. You believe that the former students have sufficient grammatical knowledge, so that they don't need to improve their grammatical knowledge much while they work in Japan.

   - ○ Strongly disagree
   - ○ Disagree
   - ○ Neither agree nor disagree
   - ○ Agree
   - ○ Strongly agree

7. The amount of vocabulary you taught at the Institute is sufficient for the students.

   - O Strongly disagree
   - O Disagree
   - O Neither agree nor disagree
   - O Agree
   - O Strongly agree

8. You believe that the students acquired good pronunciation at the Institute.

   - O Strongly disagree
   - O Disagree
   - O Neither agree nor disagree
   - O Agree
   - O Strongly agree

9. Add any comments you would like to share about teaching grammar, word formation, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 3

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

10. The Japanese program at the Institute prepares the students well in using the Japanese language in a culturally appropriate way (such as formality and politeness)

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

11. The former students don't have any serious problems at all to use culturally appropriate Japanese expressions when talking to native Japanese speakers.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

12. The former students don't experience being in a very embarrassing situation because the Japanese expressions they use are culturally appropriate.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree

- O Strongly agree

13. Add any comments you would like to share culturally appropriate language uses.

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 4

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

14. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well to organize expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement, so that they successfully use unified spoken or written expressions.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

15. You believe that the former students have never failed to organize proper utterance, or had deviation in the expressions they used.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree

- O Strongly agree

16. Add any comments about organizing proper Japanese expressions.

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 5

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

17. The Japanese program at the Institute prepared the former students well to develop skills to rephrase when they forget or don't know a particular word.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

18. You believe that the former students have developed skills to use different words or phrases when they don't know a particular word to use in order to continue conversation.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree

- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

19. Do you believe that the former students have developed skills to manage communicating with native Japanese speakers even if they forget or they don't know words? If so, why?

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 6

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

20. The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing listening skills.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

21. The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing reading skills.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree

- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

22. The Japanese program at the Institute provides the students good learning materials for developing writing skills.
    - O Strongly disagree
    - O Disagree
    - O Neither agree nor disagree
    - O Agree
    - O Strongly agree

23. The Japanese program at the Institute provides reasonable amount of speaking practice.
    - O Strongly disagree
    - O Disagree
    - O Neither agree nor disagree
    - O Agree
    - O Strongly agree

24. Add any comments you have regarding the learning materials used at the Institute.

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 7

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

25. The teaching methodology used for building grammatical competence is good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

26. The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to use language in a culturally appropriate way is good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

27. The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to make utterances sequentially or with proper arrangement is good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

28. The teaching methodology used for improving students' skills to rephrase unknown words is good.

- O Strongly disagree
- O Disagree
- O Neither agree nor disagree
- O Agree
- O Strongly agree

29. Add any comments or suggestions you have regarding teaching methodology used at the Institute.

Survey Questions for Instructors

Section 8

DIRECTION: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE.

30. Provide any comments, suggestions, and opinions you may have regarding the Japanese program at the Institute.

Thank you for your crucial participation in this survey.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For Students

Information about the Interviewee:

1. How long did you work in Japan?
2. Did you often talk to the Japanese people in Japanese while you stayed there?
3. Did you enjoy speaking Japanese to the Japanese people?

Please tell me your experience with the use of the Japanese language.

Linguistic Competence

1. When talking to native Japanese speakers, how did you feel about your grammar knowledge?
2. Tell me, in detail, about your knowledge of the Japanese grammar, word formations, and pronunciation.
3. Do you think your knowledge is sufficient?
4. What kinds of challenges did you experience when utilizing the grammatical knowledge?
5. Tell me any incident you had with the usage of Japanese grammar, word formations, and sound systems.

Sociocultural Competence

6. How do you think of your sociocultural knowledge that affects language use?
7. Do you think you had sufficient knowledge about Japanese culture which directly influences the language use?
8. Tell me about a time when sociocultural issues you learned had a negative or positive impact on communication in Japanese.
9. Do you have any incident you want to share with me in regard to the use of the socioculturally proper Japanese expressions?

10. What kinds of challenges do you experience when managing socioculturally appropriate Japanese expressions when speaking to native Japanese speakers?

Discourse Competence

11. How do you think of your skills to form semantically appropriate Japanese expressions you wanted to use?

12. Tell me about your skills of organizing Japanese expressions sequentially, or with good arrangement.

13. Do you have any incident you want to share with me regarding the use of sequentially awkward Japanese expressions?

14. Do you have any incident you want to share with me regarding miscommunication caused by deviated forms and uses?

Strategic Competence

15. When you cannot recall words, or you forget words you need to use for continuing conversation, what do you usually do?

16. How do you think of your skills to manage conversations even when you don't know particular words to use?

17. Did you have experience of forgetting words you needed to use, and couldn't recall them?
    -- if yes, what did you do that time?

18. What kinds of challenge do you experience when managing conversation?

Curriculum Materials used at the Institute

19. Tell me about your opinions about curriculum materials.

20. What kinds of materials do you think are useful?

21. What kinds of challenges did you experience with the materials?

Teaching Methodology

22. Tell me about your opinions about teaching methods used at the Institute?

23. What types of teaching methods do you think were effective?

24. Do you have any episode you want to share with me regarding teaching methods used?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For Instructors

Linguistic Competence

1. What do you think of former students' grammatical knowledge?

2. Do you think that the students had any serious problems in forming grammatical Japanese expressions, since they had sufficient grammar knowledge when talking to native Japanese speakers?
   -- if yes, why do you think so?

   -- if no, why do you think so?

3. What do you think of the amount of vocabulary the former students acquired?

4. What do you think of the students' pronunciation?

5. How would you evaluate the students' writing skills?

Sociocultural Competence

6. What do you think of the former students' sociocultural knowledge?

7. Do you think that the students had sufficient knowledge about Japanese culture, which directly influences the language use? Why do you think so?

8. Do you think the students had any problems in using socioculturally appropriate styles of Japanese expressions?
   -- if yes, why do you think so?
   -- if no, why do you think so?

9. What kinds of challenges do you think the former students might have experienced regarding the use of socioculturally appropriate Japanese?

Discourse Competence

10. Do you think the students were able to form semantically appropriate Japanese

    expressions they wanted to use? Why?

11. How do you evaluate the former students' skills in organizing utterances sequentially?

12. What kinds of challenges do you think the former students might have experienced in organizing expressions sequentially?

Strategic Competence

13. What do you think the students do when they forget, or don't know words or expressions necessary for continuing communication?

14. Do you think the students can manage conversation when they forget words?

Curriculum Materials

15. Tell me about the curriculum materials you use at the Institute?

16. What do you think of the quality of the materials?

17. Do you think the curriculum materials used at the Institute are adequate for developing communicative competence?

Teaching Methodology

18. Tell me what teaching methods you often adopt at the Institute?

19. What types of teaching methods do you think are effective? Why?

Others

21. What else would you like to share about teaching experience at the Institute?

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH SUBJECT

(For Former Students)

Purpose and Background

Yukiko Konishi, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is engaging in a study on Evaluation of the Japanese Language Program at the government-sponsored foreign language institute. The researcher will conduct a survey for this study, and needs the survey participants who have studied the Japanese language at the Institute, and worked in Japan after graduating from the Institute. The purpose of conducting this research is to examine whether the former students who are assigned to study the Japanese language as a foreign language can develop better communicative competence. This study will help the language programs at the Institute make further improvement in the quality of teaching practice.

I am being asked to participate in the survey because I am a graduate who studied Japanese at the Institute, and worked (or am currently working) in Japan, and I am over 18 years old.

Procedure

If I agree to be a survey participant, the following will occur:

1. The researcher will contact me through email to confirm the participation.

2. I will receive the electronic survey form with two types of questions: One is Likert-style questions in which I am asked to choose one answer out of 5 points such as *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree*. The other type of question is open-ended, which I need to answer in my own words.

3. After I complete the questions, I am asked to send the electronic survey form with the responses back to the researcher.

Risks/Discomforts

In case, the participants find that answering some questions make them feel uncomfortable, they are free to decline to answer any questions.

Benefits

Although I will not obtain a direct benefit from participating in this survey research study, my responses will make a great contribution, not only to the students who are currently studying the Japanese language, but future students learning the language at the Institute, as well as the Japanese instructors, since this study will help any people who belong to the Japanese program. Furthermore, it would be a great contribution to the entire community of the Institute, since any findings from this study will address common and important key factors for improving the quality of the language programs of the Foreign Language Institute.

Costs/Financial Considerations

No financial costs will be charged for my participation in this study.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Questions

I have asked Yukiko Konishi about questions I had about this study, and all of the questions have been answered. If I have any further questions regarding this study, I will contact her by email at ykonishi@usfca.edu.

In case I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should contact the researcher first. When, for some reason, I do not wish to do this, I may contact IRBPHS, which is concerned with the protection of research volunteers. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voice message. I may also e-mail IRBPHS@usfca.edu or write to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Bldg., University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA-94117-1080.

Consent

I have been provided a copy of this signed consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be a participant in this study, or to withdraw from it at any time. My decision to participate or not in this study will have no effect on my current or future status as a graduate of the Institute.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date of Signature
_____	_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date of Signature

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH SUBJECT

(For Instructors)

Purpose and Background

Yukiko Konishi, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is engaging in a study on Evaluation of the Japanese Language Program at the government-sponsored foreign language institute. The researcher will conduct a survey for this study, and needs the survey participants who are currently teaching Japanese, or have taught the language at the Institute. The purpose of conducting this research is to examine whether the former students who are assigned to study the Japanese language as a foreign language can develop better communicative competence. Both the opinions from the former students and the instructors would play important roles for this research. This study will help the language programs at the Institute make further improvement in the quality of teaching practice.

I am being asked to participate in the survey because I am a Japanese instructor of the Institute, who currently teaches Japanese, or who used to teach Japanese at the Institute.

Procedure

If I agree to be a survey participant, the following will occur:

1. The researcher will contact me through email to confirm the participation.

2. I will receive the electronic survey form with two types of questions: One is Likert-style questions in which I am asked to choose one answer out of 5 points such as *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree*. The other type of question is open-ended, which I need to answer in my own words.

3. After I complete the questions, I am asked to send the electronic survey form with the responses back to the researcher.

Risks/Discomforts

In case, the participants find that answering some questions make them feel uncomfortable, they are free to decline to answer any questions.

Benefits

Although I will not obtain a direct benefit from participating in this survey research study, my responses will make a great contribution, not only to the students who are currently studying the Japanese language, but future students learning the language at the Institute, as well as the Japanese instructors, since this study will help any people who belong to the Japanese program. Furthermore, it would be a great contribution to the entire community of the Institute, since any findings from this study will address common and important key factors for improving the quality of the language programs of the Foreign Language Institute.

Costs/Financial Considerations

No financial costs will be charged for my participation in this study.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Questions

I have asked Yukiko Konishi about questions I had about this study, and all of the questions have been answered. If I have any further questions regarding this study, I will contact her by email at ykonishi@usfca.edu.

In case I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should contact the researcher first. When, for some reason, I do not wish to do this, I may contact IRBPHS, which is concerned with the protection of research volunteers. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voice message. I may also e-mail IRBPHS@usfca.edu or write to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Bldg., University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA-94117-1080.

Consent

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PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be a participant in this study, or to withdraw from it at any time. My decision to participate or not in this study will have no effect on my current or future status as a graduate of the Institute.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date of Signature
_____	_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date of Signature